

25,000 bullets mark the 'liberation' of Gaza

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (Agencies) — Palestinian policemen and the armed fighters of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's Fateh Movement fired 25,000 bullets in the air Wednesday to celebrate the "liberation" of Gaza after 27 years of occupation.

"I'm flying like a bird," said Ziyad Al Atrash, one of the PLO generals who has returned to the Strip to run the police force. "I am waking up from a dream and I feel it has become reality."

"The shooting, that's a people marking their freedom," said Gen. Atrash, his voice breaking with emotion.

As soon as the last Israeli soldier drove out of Gaza City in the early hours of Wednesday, Gen. Atrash, who sits on a liaison committee with Israel, was the first to climb onto the roof of the military governor's headquarters.

He pointed his Kalashnikov to the sky and emptied its clip.

The Israeli army left Gaza City until last, pulling out first from the centre and south, of the strip, then from the West Bank town of Jericho, leaving the city centre headquarters to last.

"I feel like a man who has returned home after a long journey, like a mother who finds her lost child."

"If I had not been able to witness all this I would have given my sight to my son so he

could see it," Gen. Atrash said.

In the abandoned headquarters, the Hebrew writing on the wall warned, "If you want peace prepare for war."

But the Palestinian police were oblivious to anything but the swarming crowd of well-wishers, who danced, sang and waved flags as fireworks exploded all around.

Every policeman, former soldiers of the Palestine Liberation Army, emptied three clips on his rifle to mark the end of the long, painful exile.

The youngest among them knew of "Palestine" only from the lips of parents.

"I have been fighting since my youth and now I've arrived here and I am already old," said the police chief, General Nasr Youssef.

"I now want my people to enjoy better living conditions, I want the region to be calm and the next generation to live in peace."

The muezzin's pre-dawn call echoes over the city, but the party goes on.

Those who fought the occupation from inside the territories, the underground guerrillas, are out on the streets in force after years of being hunted by Israeli undercover units.

Mahmud Al Khor aimed his Uzi machine pistol in the air and let rip.

Once head of the Fateh

Hawks, the 35-year-old has spent 15 years in Israeli jails.

"I thought I would be killed before I saw this day," he admitted.

"It's a magnificent moment that many of my comrades have not seen because they were killed too soon."

It was all too much for Sami Al Khodari. His childhood dream has come true.

He was born with the occupation and lived outside the military headquarters all his life.

Khodari always wanted to hoist a Palestinian flag on the giant antenna atop the building.

"Now I'm waiting for Abu Ammar (Arafat) and all my brothers from outside," he said.

Israeli and Palestinian generals smiled and toasted each other at Palestinian Police Headquarters in Gaza when the last Israeli troops pulled out of the strip on Wednesday.

On the streets, Israeli troops and Palestinian youths marked the occasion a different way with a final ritual "clash", complete with insults, jostling, stonethrowing and tear gas.

"Liz Al Din, Liz Al Din," screamed dozens of teenagers in the faces of men from Israel's feared Givati Brigade, idolising the military wing of the Islamic resistance movement Hamas, which killed two Israelis earlier in the day.



LAST TROOPS IN GAZA: Israel soldiers from Gaza command headquarters in Gaza run from stone-throwers as they withdrew City Wednesday (AFP photo)

Turkish Kurds are fleeing into north Iraq

BAHERY, Iraq (R) — More than 4,000 Turkish Kurds have fled into northern Iraq over the same mountain route used in reverse by thousands of terrified Iraqi Kurds who took refuge in Turkey in the chaotic aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War.

About 2,200 men, women and children are camped in tents and makeshift shelters made of plastic sheeting and branches on the banks of a stream at Bahery, northeast of Zakho, a few kilometres from the Turkish frontier.

Another 400 recent arrivals are living nearby in white U.N.-provided tents on a mountain roadside at Sheranish.

Hundreds more, who trickled in during the last six months, are living in villages near Zakho, mostly in rented houses.

An official of the U.N. High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) said 4,022 fugitives from Turkey's war with Kurdish rebels had been counted by last week and more were coming.

"We believe about 22-25 families are crossing every day," said one UNHCR official, who asked not to be named.

The flight of the Turkish Kurds is on a much smaller scale than the Iraqi Kurdish exodus which shocked the world three years ago, but the suffering is no less real.

"We are forced to live here like animals in dirt and fear," said Ahmet, a shepherd from Aktunman village near the Turkish town of Uludere, as Turkish jets droned high overhead.

Ali Cetin, 30, said he had left Tasdelen village, near Uludere, two months ago. "The Turks were bombing us, destroying houses, firing at our children and livestock," he said.

Turkey said last week that the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) had orchestrated the exodus as a publicity ploy.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Ferhat Ataman said the PKK was staging a scenario to "deceive the foreign public" and present the displaced people as "Kurds escaping Turkish oppression."

The UNHCR, however, says the Turkish Kurds are refugees who have a reasonable fear of persecution in their own country.

The fugitives do not feel entirely safe so close to the Turkish border, saying Turkish planes and helicopters often bombard the area, where PKK guerrillas have hideouts.

Many of the Kurds first stopped at Qasrok, closer to the Turkish border, but relief officials said they abandoned the site after Turkish air raids on April 21, which also forced Iraqi Kurds to evacuate the village of Parakhi.

The UNHCR may move the Turkish Kurds to a safer area near Atrush, about 50 kilometres south of the border, where it is considering building them a new camp with shelters.

"First we need to get a budget from the UNHCR in Geneva," the UNHCR official said. "So far we have been distributing tents, blankets, jerrycans and food from stocks meant for northern Iraq — these will have to be replaced."

For now, the refugees in the mountains are living in precarious conditions, with no clean water or sanitation.

"The health situation is not bad so far, but it is getting worse," said a foreign doctor working for a Swedish charity. "We are seeing more diarrhoea and skin manifestations due to the lack of clean water. Summer heat could make things worse."

Iraqi Kurds show an instinctive sympathy for their Turkish kin, recalling the way Turkish Kurds came to their aid after their panic-stricken flight from President Saddam Hussein's army after a failed Kurdish uprising in March 1991.

"I'll never forget what those villagers did for us in the first week before the United Nations and the relief groups began to help us," said a well-educated Iraqi Kurd from Dahuk.

But many people in northern Iraq themselves need foreign relief aid, thanks to the double embargo imposed by the United Nations on Iraq and by the Baghdad government on the north.

The crippled economy can offer little to newcomers and Iraqi Kurdish farmers do not want refugees on their land.

The plight of the Iraqi Kurds in 1991 prompted the United States, Britain and France to set up safe havens inside Iraq to allow the displaced population to return home. Allied planes still patrol northern skies daily from bases in Turkey.

This year Turkey has intensified its struggle to wipe out the PKK, but denies that its forces are deliberately destroying or emptying Kurdish-populated villages in the southeast.

More than 11,000 people have been killed in Turkey since the PKK launched its fight for a separate state in 1984.

Gaza Jewish settler dreams fade as autonomy unfolds

KFAR DAROM, Gaza Strip (R) — Peace for the Jewish settlers in Kfar Darom means a new, three-metre-high dirt barricade.

Residents said Tuesday the Israeli army dug it for them before handing over control of the Gaza Strip to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

"Because of the peace they did that for us," said a Kfar Darom resident, who is stationed inside the enclave, for a bus behind the freshly-hewn fortification next to the already existing perimeter wall.

Israel Tuesday signed away control of the administration of Gaza to Palestinians after 27 years of Israeli rule.

The Gaza handover was accompanied by Jewish-Arab violence in the West Bank where Israel handed over Jericho last Friday.

There are no Jewish settlements in Jericho, only a synagogue. But in Gaza some 4,000 Israelis live in 17 settlements.

The Israeli army, expected to leave Arab population centres in Gaza in the next 24 hours, has closed in on the settlements.

The settlers feel an acute pinch after expanding for 15 years under night-wing Israeli governments before centrist Yitzhak Rabin became prime minister in 1992.

Settlers now complain about Israeli soldiers.

"Nobody wants an army camp inside their community," said Arik Ben Kanan, secretary of the block of settlements in Gaza known as Gush Katif.

The interim deal crafted by Mr. Rabin's government with the PLO providing self-rule allows settlers to remain at least until a final peace deal is cut.

But the army has moved in with the settlers. Most of its main bases are in the Gush Katif block alongside the manicured settler communities. It causes friction.

Settlers indignantly rejected an army planned ceremony in Gush Katif, to mark the handover of administration of Gaza.

"We see it as a humiliating handover ceremony and we don't think it should take place in Gush Katif," said Dalia Hershkovitz, spokeswoman for Gush Katif.

Ms. Hershkovitz then excused herself. One of the two Jewish settlers killed by Muslim militants near Hebron in the West Bank Tuesday had been her close friend. On Monday, Jewish settlers and soldiers had wounded 18 Arabs in a clash in Hebron.

The tiny Kfar Darom and Netzarim settlements are isolated, not contiguous to the

main Gush Katif block.

They are seven minutes apart via the main Gaza Strip road — but that is now closed to settlers under complicated traffic arrangements provided in the peace deal between Israel and PLO, Kfar Darom resident Tal Sudri said.

Ms. Sudri, who works at a nursery at Netzarim, must now drive out of Gaza on a lateral road into Israel and re-enter Gaza at the lateral road that leads to Netzarim. It takes an hour.

Ms. Sudri, a religious Jew who believes Gaza belongs to the Jews by Biblical right, says none of the inconvenience and none of the fear she feels at Palestinian rule outside the settlements would bring her to move back to Israel voluntarily.

"You don't need to read Hitchcock-like books to imagine what can happen here," she said. But added: "It is impossible to get us out of here."

She said she grew up dreaming of being a pioneer and defender of Israel and added: "I know that they don't want Gaza. They want Jerusalem. They took this as a base."

Israel and the PLO left occupied Jerusalem, the eastern Arab half captured by Israel in 1967, for negotiations on a final deal.

Asked what she would do if the government one day cut a deal and forced her to move, she said with a catch in her voice: "I can't think about that... I don't know what I would do."

Palestinian intelligence chief hid out in Israel for 27 years

GAZA CITY, occupied Gaza Strip (AFP) — The Palestinian intelligence chief for Gaza and Jericho lived in hiding in Israel for 27 years, when even his family believed he had died, a senior Palestinian police officer disclosed here Monday.

The officer told AFP that General Mosbah Hanafi Rushdie Sakr was missing during the 1967 Middle East war in which Israel seized the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

But the intelligence chief for the self-rule areas of Jericho and Gaza lived in Israel under a false name.

PLO leader Yasser Arafat "announced to us, a few days ago, that he (Sakr) would be the next chief of the intelligence services," the officer said, declining to be named.

Born in Gaza in 1943, Sakr graduated as an officer from the Cairo Military Academy in the late 1960s. He was commander of the Palestine Liberation Army for the Khan Yunis area of Gaza in 1967,

when he disappeared without a trace.

A nephew, taxi-driver Bashir Sakr, said the head of the Palestinian police force contacted the family last week.

"General Nasr Youssef sent two of his men to my house on Thursday, in my absence, and asked my mother: 'Where's your brother Mosbah?' The poor woman replied she had no idea," the nephew said.

"Then I met a deputy to the general who asked me what I knew of my uncle Mosbah, and I replied that he was dead."

"He replied: 'No. Your uncle is alive and is living someplace nearby. If he turns up or calls, tell him that President Arafat wants to speak to him or that he should come to our offices.'"

Some people believed General Sakr had drowned swimming the Jordan River from the West Bank to Jordan.

But his brother Hamis said he had never really believed Mosbah was dead. "I didn't

wear black in mourning. I asked the International Committee of the Red Cross but they never found him in Israeli prisons."

He also investigated in Amman and Beirut as well as with the PLO, who said the general had died a martyr for the Palestinian cause.

"When I found out he was still alive, I burst into tears. But I won't really believe that either until I've touched his hand," said the brother, a merchant in Gaza City.

Even the general's wife, Nisamat Barzak, who runs a school, has not had contact with him throughout the 27 years in Israeli occupation, according to the family.

Their two grown-up sons, now abroad working in Arab countries, also never saw their father and "only know his face from old photographs," said Hamis, as people entered his shop to congratulate him on the wonderful news.

39 held as Egypt police break up protest

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian riot police Tuesday fired tear gas at thousands of lawyers protesting the death of a colleague in police detention, wounding two people and making 39 arrests, the Interior Ministry said.

About 6,000 people were gathered at the Bar Association's headquarters in central Cairo when baton-wielding riot

police intervened with tear gas as the demonstrators neared the gates to march on the presidential palace.

The association, which is dominated by Muslim fundamentalists, said it had tried several times to secure authorisation for the march in protest at the alleged torturing to death of Abdul Hareth Madani.

It had given assurances the

demonstration would be peaceful.

But the Interior Ministry said the association was backed by extremists out to stir trouble in the streets and had stoned the police and shouted slogans against the government.

Two people were slightly wounded and 39 others arrested, 27 of them lawyers, it said.

Egypt urged to give Copts greater role

CAIRO (R) — A leading human rights campaigner urged Egypt Tuesday to lift 19th century laws which he said discriminate against the country's minority Christian Copts.

Saadeldin Ibrahim said Egypt should also remedy the lack of Coptic officials in many areas of government and a marked absence of Coptic history in school textbooks.

"We have a long list of proposals from changing some laws... which go back to 1863, all the way to changing the textbooks, and so on," he said.

Under a law enacted in 1856,

when Egypt was a province of the Ottoman Empire, Copts require a presidential decree every time they build new churches or repair existing ones, he added.

"Even to repair the (church) bathroom you need a presidential decree," he said.

Mr. Ibrahim, who heads a development studies centre in Cairo, was speaking at a news conference to present initial reports from a controversial conference held to discuss minorities in the Arab World.

The meeting, held last week, was moved from Cairo to Cyprus at the last minute because of an outcry against plans to discuss the Copts. Protesters said Copts, far from being a minority, were a homogeneous part of Egyptian society and that the meeting was a front for foreign meddling.

Kurds, Berbers, Palestinians, southern Sudanese and Shiite Muslims also attended the three-day conference.

Government figures show Copts make up around 6.5 per cent of Egypt's population of 58 million. The Copts say the

figure is nearer 10 million.

Ibrahim said delegates agreed on the need to reconcile the principle of full rights for minorities, including in some cases self-determination, with the need to avoid splitting countries into separate states on religious or ethnic lines.

"The most important thing in the conference was to break the taboo of discussing minority problems, which everybody in his heart knows exists but no one wants to talk about," he said.

"Call them whatever — a sect, denomination... more important than the naming is to see if they have grievances," he added.

"If you study in Egyptian schools from the first grade to the 12th grade there is no presence of the Copts in any of our textbooks."

He said although one of Egypt's most prominent international figures, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, was a Copt, there were no Copts among the country's college deans, university heads or 26 regional governors.

Ex-Israeli bank chief given 11 months in jail

TEL AVIV (R) — The man who once stood at the pinnacle of Israel's banking establishment was sentenced to 11 months in jail Wednesday, the climax of a decade-old scandal that cost taxpayers \$9 billion.

Ernst Japhet, chairman of Bank Leumi when it was Israel's biggest bank, was also fined \$300,000 by a Jerusalem court.

Mr. Japhet, 72, served as Bank Leumi's chairman for 16 years until he resigned in 1986 with a "golden handshake" of \$4.5 million.

His sentence was the heaviest punishment given the 10 former executives of Israel's top four commercial banks found guilty of manipulating the price of bank shares on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange in the early 1980s.

Implementation of sentence was delayed until the Supreme Court rules on an expected appeal. Mr. Japhet declined comment.

District Court Judge Miriam Naor shocked the banking establishment last month, sentencing nine former executives to up to eight months in jail for the fraud scandal.

She said Mr. Japhet had a greater responsibility because of his prominence in the banking establishment. He was tried separately, having only returned to Israel in January after a long, self-imposed exile to New York.

The Israeli government paid \$9 billion to buy out the banks after inflated share prices collapsed in a rush by investors to dump stocks and buy U.S. dollars on rumours of the impending devaluation of the Israeli shekel.

Thousands of small investors, many of whom viewed the shares as non-risk, lost their life savings. The government is only now selling off shares in the banks: Bank Hapoalim, Bank Leumi.

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JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDER

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PROGRAMME TWO	
17:30	News in Arabic
17:35	News in French
18:00	Monde Fantastique Des Animaux
18:30	News in Hebrew
18:35	News in Arabic
19:00	De Bout's On
20:00	Bony
21:00	Bony
22:00	News in English
22:30	Feature film "The Last Bastion"
FEATURE FILMS	
14:00	Fuhr
16:30	(Success) Duha
17:30	Al-Jawh
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كنا في كونا

Majali says raises linked to economy

AMMAN (J.T.) — Civil servant pay raises are closely linked to an improvement in the economy and the necessary means to provide such increases, according to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali.

At a meeting Wednesday held at the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment, Dr. Majali said the government is determined to grant qualified and competent employees further incentives to encourage them to increase their efficiency and creativity.

The premier stressed the government's drive to apply what he called the "freedom and participation" principle in all fields and support all efforts to enable employees to shoulder their responsibilities in a better, more efficient manner.

He said the government has a duty to place the right person in the right position and to encourage serious discussions in an atmosphere of freedom to solve problems. Dr. Majali was attending a meeting of the ministry's Planning Committee along with Minister Ahmad Alkhalil and senior officials.

Last month Finance Minister Sami Gammoh said the government was not considering an "across-the-board" pay raise for civil servants and was not aware of reports that Parliament members and senior gov-



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Wednesday attends a meeting of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment planning committee (Petra photo)

ernment officials were poised to get a substantial hike in allowances and salaries.

Mr. Gammoh had told the Jordan Times that there was no plan for any such raise, at least during 1994.

A raise offered to government employees in 1993 increased government spending by JD 70 million that year.

In the discussions that followed the prime minister's remarks Wednesday, Dr. Majali replied to a question saying that Jordan deeply believed in collective Arab action in the Middle East peace process.

We believe that no single Arab party should follow an independent course in the current peace process," he said.

According to Dr. Majali Jordan would continue "to stand by all the Arab brothers in all matters, because the Kingdom believes in a comprehensive, durable and just peace which constitutes the basis for the region's stability."

House endorses draft insurance law

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Lower House of Parliament Wednesday endorsed a draft insurance law after amending its 56th article concerning the creation of further insurance companies in Jordan.

Article 56 read: "No new insurance companies are to be registered in the country after the endorsement of this law except through a decision by the Council of Ministers based upon recommendations from the Minister of Industry and Trade."

The house amended the article to read: "in line with a set of regulations to be issued for this purpose."

The government last month presented the draft law to the House, but later asked the lawmakers to put off discussion of the law in light of developments that led to negotiations with insurance companies.

The government was first motivated to submit the draft

law because at the time the insurance companies had stopped issuing liability insurance policies, thus endangering people's lives, according to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali in remarks to the House on March 6.

After the draft law was approved by the Cabinet, the companies reversed their decision and returned to selling liability insurance policies.

The House's endorsement of the amended law followed a lengthy debate of the draft during which some deputies demanded that the government return the law to the House's judiciary and financial committees for further study because of what they called the law's significant impact on the national economy.

Several deputies who referred to the government's earlier motion requesting an urgent discussion of the draft law and

later cancelling the urgency, demanded that the government present an explanation for its action.

Other deputies demanded that the government clarify the question of the reported government decision to raise insurance premium's by 50 per cent over two years.

Others demanded that the government conduct a full examination of the status of the insurance industry, saying that 17 companies have been monopolising insurance operations in the Kingdom, practices which they said are unconstitutional and cause damage to the public interest.

In reply, the prime minister said the press reports saying that insurance rates would be increased were totally groundless.

He said the government was negotiating with the insurance companies over studies to better organise the industry.

Referring to the government's decision to cancel its request to discuss the draft law, Dr. Majali said, "it must be clear to all that the government was serious and never contemplated any prevarications when it requested an urgent debate, since that was needed at the time."

But he said when the insurance companies started the negotiations there was no longer a need for the urgent request.

Stressing that the government does not enact laws under pressure from any external parties, the prime minister said that the government continues to seek laws that are regarded as serving national interests.

House Speaker Taher Al Masri announced that the next session would be held after Al Adha feast and an exact date will be fixed later.

WAJ pumps more water to Amman before feast

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ) Wednesday announced it would pump additional water supplies to all regions of Amman from Wednesday until the start of Al Adha feast Saturday.

WAJ Director General and Ministry of Water and Irrigation Secretary General Qusai Qteishat said arrangements have been made in cooperation with the Jordan Valley Authority and other

concerned authorities to pump additional water from Zay region near Salt to meet the expected increase in water consumption in Amman.

"We are still committed to the water distribution programme which started earlier this month and we will return to it after the Adha feast, pumping water to different regions of the capital in turn," Mr. Qteishat told the Jordan Times.

To increase the water supply, WAJ will in the coming two

days begin pumping water from the Heidan springs south of Madaba at full capacity, estimated at 2,000 cubic metres per hour, said Mr. Qteishat.

He said that in the past two and a half years WAJ has been pumping water from Heidan springs to the Amman area at the rate of 1,200 cubic metres per hour.

The completion of equipment installation and related technical work has enabled WAJ to start full capacity pumping from Heidan, be

added.

At the same time, Mr. Qteishat said, WAJ is intent on developing and utilising smaller artesian wells in different regions to meet the expected increase in water demand during the summer.

He said WAJ was adopting a policy whereby different villages and population settlements would be supplied by separate nearby artesian wells rather than from main water springs and artesian wells that feed towns.

Jordan reiterates support for Bosnia

Delegation reports on IPU meeting in Brussels

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Wednesday reiterated Jordan's support for the Bosnian people noting that the Kingdom's participation in the peace keeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia were motivated by humanitarian sentiments.

"As prime minister, who was speaking in his office with Jordan's delegation to the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) meeting in Brussels to discuss the situation in Bosnia last month, cited the in-kind assistance offered by Jordan to the Bosnian people and its hosting of Bosnian families in Amman as part of the humanitarian assistance to Bosnia."

Dr. Majali thanked the delegation, led by Kamel Sharif, for its efforts during the meeting in support of the Bosnian people's rights. The premier was given a copy of

the resolutions passed at the end of the Brussels meetings.

Mr. Sharif outlined the outcome of the conference which, he said, stressed the right of the Bosnian people to self-defence and international support for ending the arms embargo imposed by the United Nations on Bosnia.

Dr. Majali said that Jordan would uphold the IPU's recommendations and resolutions and support their implementation.

Mr. Sharif was accompanied to the Brussels meeting by Monsignor Raouf Najjar of the Roman Catholic Church in Jordan, Laith Shubailat, president of the Jordan Engineers Association, Mousa Kilani, editor-in-chief of Al Dustour, Izzat Jaradat, a columnist and Father Constantine Karmash of the Greek Orthodox Church in Amman.

NEWS IN BRIEF

HUDD project goes to local firm

AMMAN (Petra) — The Housing and Urban Development Department HUDD Wednesday granted a local construction firm a JD 1.076 million contract to set up school buildings, a health centre and a community centre for Al Zarga Housing Estate. The construction work, which is to be completed in 15 months, was designed to serve the inhabitants of 150 housing units and owners of 1,000 plots of land nearby, according to HUDD Director General Youssef Hiyasat. The entire 425 dunum area where the department had set up the housing units, complete with all basic infrastructure, will later be surrounded by public gardens and will have a car park, said Mr. Hiyasat in a statement at the contract signing ceremony.

Experts seek equal opportunities for disabled

AMMAN (Petra) — An international conference, organised by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) under the title "Equalisation of opportunities for disabled persons," Wednesday opened at the Jerusalem Hotel in Amman. Participants in the two-day conference, representing, in addition to UNRWA, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), and the World Health Organisation (WHO), will discuss issues related to providing equal opportunities to handicapped persons, rehabilitating them and merging them in the society. Director of UNRWA's Disability Programme Suad Alwan told the opening ceremony that UNRWA runs rehabilitation programmes in five centres for the disabled in Al Baggaa, Souf, Jerash, and Azmi al Mufri refugee camps in addition to one in Waqqa town in the northern Jordan Valley region. She said the UNRWA commissioner-general has also decided to allocate 20 per cent of its job opportunities to the handicapped.

Police search for missing teenager

By Rana Hussein

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Police and family members are looking for a 15-year-old boy missing since May 9. Ismail, the ninth son of Abdul Ghani Abu Sharkh, a tailor who lives in Ruseifeh, left home and did not return that Monday evening after a family argument, his sister Neimat said.

The family notified all police stations and hospitals in Irbid and also placed an advertisement in local newspapers with a photo of the boy.

Neimat told the Jordan Times that her father divorced her mother on May 9. "My brother is very sensitive, and when my mother was divorced she had to leave our house, and so did my brother," the sister said.

She said the family situation in their house was always troublesome, and her brother

dropped out of school because he was unable to concentrate on his studies.

"I did not expect my brother to run away from home, because he never thought of it before," the 30-year-old added.

Man drowns in well

On Tuesday, in Ramtha, a 30-year-old man drowned in a well, two others were reported in fair condition and three Civil Defence Department (CDD) officers suffered minor injuries while attempting to rescue the three men, CDD and police reports said.

According to the report, Ismail (the drowning victim) and his two brothers were installing a water pump for their well in the yard of their home. The report said Ismail accidentally fell into the well. His two brothers tried unsuccessfully to rescue him as did a CDD rescue team which was called to the scene.



Ismail Abu Sharkh

A CDD official told the Jordan Times that the well was tight, and his rescue team became fatigued while trying to pull out the three men.

All six persons were rushed to Ramtha Military Hospital. The five who survived were listed in fair to good condition.

Woman commits suicide

A 24-year-old woman from Irbid committed suicide Monday by setting herself on fire, according to the CDD. Rita B.B., died in her house after she poured kerosene on her body and set herself aflame, a family member told the Jordan Times.

The source said that the woman suffered from mental illness since 1987 after her husband deserted her.

According to a CDD report, the department was called out to 100 accidents between Monday and Tuesday; 75 were rescue cases. The report mentioned three other women who attempted to commit suicide. One woman died, the other two were listed in critical condition.

The report gave no details as to the names and ages, of the three women.

By Natasha Bakhari

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Political parties are in agreement that a more communicative and cooperative working relationship with the government is needed if those parties are to become effective elements in Jordan's political, social, and intellectual life.

While some party leaders argue that people are reluctant to join political parties because the government is trying to marginalise their role in decision making concerning national issues, the government sees the parties' ineffectiveness on the ground to be caused by their inability to come up with something "new and practical" that would encourage people, according to Interior Minister Saleh Hamad.

Mr. Hamad told reporters that the meeting he had with political parties' secretary generals last week was aimed at "strengthening the relationship between the Ministry

of Interior and political parties," and that it was very useful in that area.

Party leaders want the government to consult with them on national issues for the sake of reaching common ground.

"Political parties represent the different sectors of society, and they should be part of the country's executive body (government)," said Ali Amer, the secretary general of the Jordanian Progressive Democratic Party (JPDP).

Mr. Amer said the political parties' failure to come up with practical programmes to counter what he believes is the government's undemocratic method, is another factor that further adds to political parties' ineffectiveness.

"Our government uses democracy as a disposable mantle that it chooses to wear or take off whenever it fancies," charged Abdul Aziz Jaber, an Islamic Action Front (IAF) deputy, referring to what he sees

as government's indifference to several requests made by deputies.

Former member of the Arab Democratic Party (ADP), Deputy Samir Habashneh told the Jordan Times that political parties are like transplanted kidneys in a body that rejects them.

"The government is the body that rejects the kidney, thus negating its role as a main organ for the proper functioning of the body's system," said the deputy.

Mr. Habashneh added that unless wide communication bridges between the two camps are established, parties will continue to lack credibility and remain ineffective. He said the average citizen will continue to abstain from joining parties if he or she is not convinced of the parties' effective role in the structure of the country.

In a memorandum sent to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali last month, seven political parties demanded that the government consult with them and all other licensed parties on matters of national interest and allocate funds and provide facilities to help political groups conduct their activities.

In response, Dr. Majali said the government would do all it could to respond to the demands.

In the meeting which discussed the working relationship between the government and political parties, Mr. Hamad pledged to provide the political parties with any information they need on agreements or protocols signed by Jordan with other countries.

Deputy Ali Abul Ragheb, a centrist, told the Jordan Times that the parties should assume their role in Parliament. He said that although quite a few parties were represented in Parliament, the only one with "significant representation was the Islamic Action Front."

"They (the IAF) are an

opposition party all the way and they are united in their stand towards the government," said the deputy, adding that the other parties "do not know what they want and lack a clear-cut working scheme, whether supporting or opposing the government."

Commenting on party leaders' complaints that the government marginalises their role in Jordan, Mr. Abul Ragheb said the government tries to undermine whoever threatens its authority, including deputies.

"The government is incapable of applying democracy within its different bodies, so how do you expect it to be fair to political parties whose majority oppose the government?" the deputy said.

At a meeting at the Royal Court with Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Taher Masri, members of the House's various committees and spokespersons of par-

liamentary blocs, His Majesty King Hussein urged parliamentarians to "continue their distinguished work in the fields of legislation and monitoring the government's performance," according to Petra news agency.

The King also emphasised the need to establish democratic norms and constructive dialogue to "enrich the march (of democracy) and enable it to achieve its noble goals."

Government and Parliament sources said that a reshuffle in the present government to include parliamentarians and political party members is expected within the coming week. The sources said this

expected reshuffle is a move towards national representation in the country's government.

Among the demands made by political party leaders was allowing parties to use Jordan Radio and Television, the Jordan News Agency, Petra and the Press and Publications Department for coverage of political parties' activities.

In response, Mr. Hamad said that radio and television time would be "completely taken up if all Jordan's 22 parties were vying for equal time."

The minister added that parties can use their newspapers for coverage purposes and

could work to "provide something different" in their publications.

Some party heads also demanded that political parties be exempted from taxation since they are among the Kingdom's legal institutions, arguing that it is the case in all democratic countries that the government contributes to minimising the expenditures of such institutions.

Commenting on this subject, Deputy Habashneh said that legalising political parties in Jordan was a very positive step towards democracy, but that much work is needed before parties are genuinely recognised and treated as a major and indispensable part of the country's political and social structure.

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Turning point in struggle

THE HANDING over Tuesday of civil control in Gaza Strip to the Palestinians is a turning point in the Palestinian struggle for liberation. The sheer size of the Palestinian population affected by this dramatic transition, estimated to be well over three quarters of a million, makes the transition an important step towards a more promising future for the peoples of this region. Gaza and Jericho constitute no more than five per cent in terms of the area of the occupied territories, but the significance of this development cannot be underestimated anyway. From now on the Palestinians will take charge of no less than 38 civil services comprising health, education, environment, taxation and day-to-day administration of the area.

The most daunting challenge facing the Palestinian administration will remain to be maintaining law and order. "Only the maintenance of security, order and calm is likely to bring success to our mission," commented the police chief for the strip Gen. Naser Yussef in the wake of the Israeli departure. But another immediate concern will be the resolution of the acute water problem facing the population, especially in Gaza. Overdrilling without any policy control or guidelines over the past years have made the water not only scarce but its quality harmful to health as well. The Israeli occupiers left the Gazans to stew in their own juice by neglecting to put in place a coherent water policy for the area for much too long after making sure that the water needs of Israeli settlements in the Gaza territory would be secured from direct Israeli sources. Given the relatively large amount of foreign aid already pledged to the Palestinian autonomous areas, the PLO leadership can now afford to put in place an entirely new framework for the economic development of the areas with environmental consideration high on its agenda as well.

Linking the Gaza Strip with the Jericho area by a lone highway under the direct control of the Israelis as is the case now can only temporarily serve the immediate interests and needs of the two Palestinian autonomous territories. Sooner or later the linkage between Gaza and the rest of the Palestinian territory in the West Bank would call for a more viable resolution within the framework of the overall settlement for the remaining areas still labouring under the yoke of direct Israeli rule.

Faisal Husseini may have summed up the present situation well by saying when he welcomed U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Jericho Tuesday: "We welcome the secretary of state here in Jericho in the first step towards (a Palestinian) state in the future." Gaza and Jericho are just the beginning of a long process that may indeed end up in getting rid of the Israeli occupation.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

IT IS ironic to think that the Yemenis, who are adhering to unity, are most concerned with pursuing the fighting, which has caused heavy loss of life and wide spread destruction, said Mahmoud Rimawi, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily. It is therefore not astonishing to see the Socialist Party of the south adopting an adamant position and seeking an end to this unity, which is sought through force and destruction, said the writer. The formation of a national salvation council in Aden grouping all the parties in addition to the socialists, is a clear indication that the southerners are intent on rejecting unity with the north because of the war being launched on them by Sanaa, he pointed out. Observers see the war as a de facto split between the north and south and a factual end to unity fought in 1990, he added. The writer said that there can be no unity between two peoples whose armed forces are locked in battle and whose leaders failed to resort to reason and dialogue to resolve their differences. Should the scenario continue, with the southerners bent on conquering the south, added the writer, there can be no choice left for the Yemeni people in Aden except to fight to the end.

A COLUMNIST in Sawt Al Shaab daily said that Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular should reject any agreement with Israel that does not ensure full rights for the lawful owners of the land and the holy places. Citing the Cairo agreement as an example of the accords that should be rejected, Mohammad Masalha said that the accord reached by the Palestinians and the Israelis grant the Arabs limited control on a very limited part of their land. While supporting the Palestinians in their ongoing endeavours to regain full rights, Jordan has blessed the return of Jericho and Gaza to Palestinian sovereignty but at the same time, the Kingdom hopes that this step would only be the first along the long path for freedom and an end to occupation, said Mr. Masalha.

The View from Academia

Higher education: A liberal system under conservative authority

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

THERE IS no doubt that the credit-hour system, introduced at our universities a little over two decades ago, is immensely sophisticated and liberal, offering students greater opportunities than in its predecessor (the so-called year system) and limitless choices. Sadly, however, our higher education establishments have not yet explored many of its enriching possibilities. In fact, and this is what causes real concern to many of its advocates, the system is recently being consistently violated and deliberately undermined.

Fundamentally, the system is based on the principle of freedom of choice. The students get to choose (among other things) not only the teacher they feel comfortable with, the time that suits them best, and the number of courses they feel able to handle per semester, but also when to take a certain course or drop it, what to minor in and what not, which electives to select, what major or majors to finally stick to, and so on.

This last point is particularly significant. In many highly competitive and highly respectable universities, which follow the system, in addition of course to the many which are not so highly competitive or respectable, the student is given greater leeway than is currently allowed at our colleges and universities in deciding when to specialise in a certain field. At the former, most students do not declare a major until they enter their junior year. This means that they spend the first two years exploring venues and experimenting with options until they finally know where their tastes and abilities really lie. By contrast, our students are asked to specify their speciality either prior to admission or at the end of the first year.

This, I believe, is unfortunate. Our students, unlike many luckier students in other parts of the world, do not have much of a chance at home and at school to test their potential strengths and weaknesses and sort out their academic or vocational preferences. Most of them, 90 per cent I would say, decide on a particular subject either because their parents wish them (at times they force them) to decide upon or, quite simply, because it is fashionable and prestigious (the latter is primarily due to peer or social influence). Very few choose a discipline after they have seriously thought about it. The least thing we could do, at the university level, is to give the students a couple of years to find out where their true calling lies, a calling to which they will be married for the rest of their lives — much like to a spouse.

Many universities have gone even further, permitting their students to major in two or more subjects at once, subjects which are at times not even remotely related. I have seen, students at U.S. universities who specialise, for example, in mathematics and French literature (simultaneously), in government and biology, in linguistics and physics, etc. Such students justify their "peculiar" decision not only (obviously) by saying that their own interest/ability is itself double or dual (i.e. they both enjoy and are good at mathematics and French literature) but also by finding concrete links between seemingly dissimilar fields of study. Many interdisciplinary barriers

have been broken.

Some colleges have adopted an even more liberal and revolutionary approach. I know, for instance, of a programme (called the college scholar programme) which has existed since the late 1970s at several American universities. The idea here is for the university to select up to 100 students annually and tailor courses to suit their individual needs. Their major, composed of a cocktail of courses from the college or the university at large, is essentially a no major; the students enjoy absolute freedom in studying any course they see fit, no questions asked.

Imagine saying this to some of our meticulous, "responsible," "rule-abiding" and extremely "patriotic" and bureaucratic university officials; they will either think you are crazy and thus laugh at you, throw you out of their office, or simply collapse as a result of surprise. Less dramatically, I can already anticipate what some readers are thinking (specially lovers of the older system). We are not in America, I hear them say; we are in Jordan. Our needs are different, our environment is different, our culture is different and our students are different. Well, I totally disagree. I think our students are sophisticated enough, responsible enough, creative enough and good enough to work within any challenging system beautifully, with proper supervision.

I do not wish to go on about what our universities may do to liberalise their policies (and thus open a can of worms), for our concern at this particular point is to restore and protect, rather than expand, the degree of liberalism we have had but are slowly losing. Let me dwell on a couple of examples to illustrate what I mean by such loss, such violation, and such undermining of the present system.

1. Until recently, our students used to transfer from one department to the other fairly easily. They took a specific number of courses from the department they wanted to join and, upon obtaining the desired grades, they were accepted into that department. The process was, on the whole, smooth and simple. Today, transfer has been exclusively limited to those students whose marks in the tawjihi entitle them to change specialties. Such measure is utterly unfair because it deprives those students, who have scored low in the tawjihi, but who have the potential to excel in a field they wish to switch to, from the chance to fulfil their dreams and prove themselves. I speak from experience when I say that some of the best students in the history of the English Department at Yarmouk are transfer students who have not scored high in the tawjihi.

University administration gives two reasons for the severe curtailing of transfer: a) that some weak students end up, through various means, in a very desirable specialty which they are not good at, and b) that transfer is a process which creates many headaches. The first reason is understandable, even though I know for sure that the number of such "weak" students can be effectively controlled and eliminated, assuming of course that it is a significant number. The second reason,

is nonsensical, for why not have a headache for a good cause? Why keep so many students in physics performing in a very mediocre way when they can distinguish themselves in modern languages? Some poor students of Arabic literature can be very successful students of business. Why kill so many talents? Because the registrar will have a headache!

2. Once upon a time our students had a long list of courses from which to choose; there were choices in the list of obligatory courses from the department, college and university and choices from the list of electives. There were, as far as I can remember, five courses from the history department, five from the department of psychology, five from mathematics, five from Arabic, etc. to select one course from in the category entitled "university requirements." For instance, if you were an English major interested in taking a course from the History Department on European history, you could, now-a-days, there is only one course in history for all university students (who are not majoring in history) to take. The list of electives within the department has also shrunk tremendously. Once upon a time also, the student used to add or drop any number of courses he/she sees fit. Today, the add/drop procedure is almost nonexistent. The rationale behind the two crucial decisions is that, as you may easily predict, the registrar and the administrators will have headaches, if they allow these extremely "irresponsible" and "capricious" students to select from a long list or to add and drop whenever they like. "We," the registrar and the administrators, have other more important business to attend to. Fine, limit the choices a little. But do not butcher and eliminate! The student should have a chance to see what the teacher looks like or what the material in the course is, before he/she commits themselves to it for the rest of the semester. We can live with some headaches! I would go as far as to say, especially to those who think there is a perfect system with no problems whatsoever, that the more headaches there are in the system the better the system may be. Let's not forget that the best system is the one which serves our students, not the registrar.

One could cite other examples. What bothers me most about the whole matter, however, is either the protective or the reductive attitude held by many of our university administrators with respect to students. In their opinion, our students are either those helpless beings who do not know what is in their best interest (and therefore we should decide for them) or those extremely malicious and irresponsible creatures whose sole job is to violate order and break systems (and therefore we should control them as much as possible). On these two counts, we are mistaken.

Frankly, we need to change our attitude regarding the way we conduct business at our universities, and we need to liberalise a little.

The writer is professor of American literature at Yarmouk University.

From Oslo to Cairo: repackaging the occupation

By Naseer Aruri

THE ROAD from Madrid to Washington to Oslo and beyond, to Taba and Cairo, has spelt disaster for the Palestinian people. Much has been said and written about the Oslo deal, the Declaration of Principles (DoP), its pitfalls, shortcomings and manipulative phrasology. But clearly, the Cairo agreements which followed on Feb. 9, and April 4 and May 4 have secured Palestinian acquiescence in Israeli unilateral acts taken in the course of the occupation.

The agreements on the questions of jurisdiction, security, economy and settlements, for example, offer insight into the final status of the occupied territories. The agreements, let us call them Cairo I, II and III, have also demonstrated that the "Gaza-Jericho First" model is not likely to improve during the next phase. After all, there is no ambiguity about the fact that, during the interim period, the status of the Gaza Strip and the "Jericho area" will be identical to that of the West Bank. Article IV and Annex II of the DoP make this quite clear.

Cynics have been saying, since Sept. 13 1993, that "Gaza-Jericho First" will also be the last. Now, after the three Cairens, the question is what kind of a "first" do we really have, and what kind of precedents have been set? The question of security and jurisdiction have clearly been decided in accordance with Israel's interpretation of Oslo, reflecting a dangerous imbalance which has already ruled out an honourable compromise. The problem, therefore, is not the Palestinians' negotiating strategy but the terms of reference they accepted. The term "negotiations" is a misnomer. Not only does Israel act in accordance with coherent strategy, it also adheres to a consistent policy, supported by domestic consensus and sustained by the U.S. and international backing. Israel's position is now bolstered by an accord whose every word, phrase, concept and even punctuation was checked to ensure its correspondence with the Zionist consensus.

Blunders at Cairo and Oslo

The Palestinian side, on the other hand, has already wasted its recognition card and, in effect, disavowed resistance, thereby removing the intifada from the calculus of the negotiations. In return for the negotiation of Israel's right to exist, the Palestinians were simply allowed to live in scattered portions of the

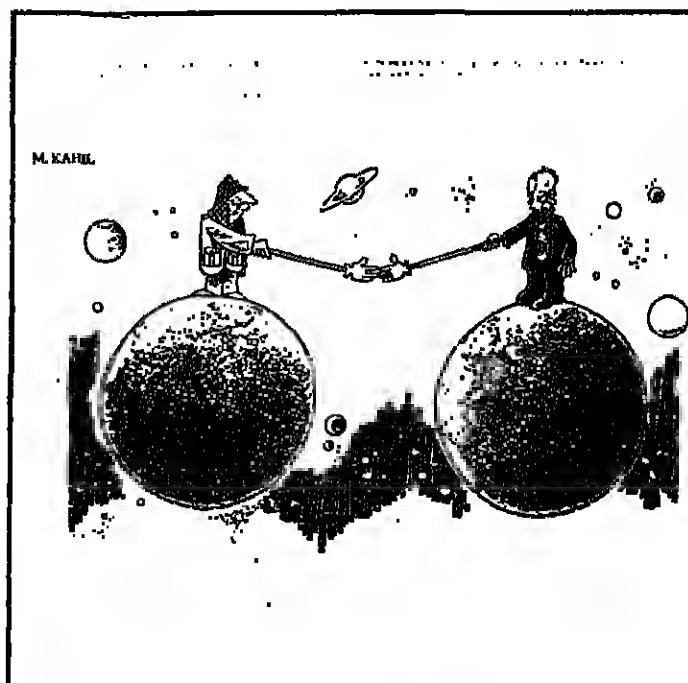
West Bank as residents in greater Israel but not as citizens in the future state of Palestine. The Oslo accords put an end to the ambiguity of Camp David regarding the nature of Palestinian rights, based on the notion that the West Bank and Gaza are disputed territory and that their status will not change, in as much as the military government will exercise all powers not transferred to the Palestinian authority, which will be legally subordinate to it. Israel will continue to exercise de facto sovereignty, and the laws of the occupation will continue to be the principal legal basis for governing the West Bank and Gaza.

The balance sheets of the Cairo agreements reveal that the outcome was consistent with the terms of the Oslo declaration of principles. Cairo I was already determined and preordained by the DoP despite nearly five months of fruitless struggle by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat to obtain a better deal. Such exertion of energy and utilisation of diplomatic resources might have been better invested in Oslo than in Cairo.

Lacking even the simplest attribute of a strategy on questions of international law, Mr. Arafat's negotiators at Oslo gave away the essence of the Palestinian position on the basis of which Palestinian rights gained world-wide recognition during the past quarter of a century. The position which Haidar Abdul Shafi's team had adhered to, on Mr. Arafat's own instructions, between October 1991 and August 1993 and during 11 rounds of negotiations, was squandered in Oslo. The DoP is not predicated on the crucial principle that Israel is an occupying power within the terms of international law. So Israel will be able to claim and exercise de facto sovereignty not only over the illegal settlements but over Gaza, Jericho and the whole West Bank as well. Without acknowledging its status as occupier, Israel will continue to shun the Geneva Conventions and shrug off its responsibility to the people while it controls their land.

Accordingly, when the deadlock over the control of border crossings, the size of Jericho and the question of security was partially resolved in Cairo on Feb. 9, Mr. Rabin felt vindicated while Mr. Arafat seemed despondent. The former had only to invoke Article VIII of the DoP.

Israel will continue to carry the responsibility for defending against external threats, as well as the responsibility



for overall security of Israelis.

Palestinian demands, therefore, for control of traffic over the Jordan and at Rafah were more in the realm of supplication than negotiation. Had Mr. Arafat planned more carefully at Oslo, he would have known the serious implications of the provision in Article VIII. That implication is exactly what he accepted: actual Israeli control of the border and symbolic Palestinian presence bestowed gratuitously. Border control was in any case confirmed as an Israeli responsibility in Cairo I, as a derivative of the external security clause in Article VIII.

The two-stage concept

The division of the "peace process" into interim phase and "final status", which is rooted in the former U.S. secretary of states George Shultz and James Baker plans of 1988 and 1989, as well as in the Israeli "election plan" of 1989, has been utilised by Israel to gain virtual PLO acquiescence in its positions on security, settlements and jurisdiction.

The security reasoning which Mr. Rabin used to confirm Israeli control of crossings in Cairo I was later claimed to confirm Israeli responsibility for overall security even in Jericho and Gaza during the interim phase. This is what Cairo II in fact resolved, and what Mr. Rabin announced on April 4 after the signing. "Only one party must retain overall responsibility for security. Israel will retain sole responsibility for security in Hebron... (and) throughout the Gaza Strip as well as in the area of Jericho where the Palestinian self-

administration body will be established."

Nor would the future entry of the Palestinian police relieve Israel of that "responsibility". Mr. Rabin added: "While there is redeployment, we continue to bear overall responsibility for whatever happens in the Gaza Strip." He made it crystal clear that a vacuum of power would not be allowed, and therefore no Palestinian police units would be deployed until they were "thoroughly ready to undertake their responsibility to uphold law and public order". No doubt, he was speaking of Israeli occupation law and the kind of public order that leaves no room for dissent. Again, the DoP ensures by virtue of Article IX that reviewing existing laws is a joint responsibility, giving Israel a veto on such a review.

Clearly, security and public order are relevant only where Israel or Israelis are concerned. The Hebron massacre and its bloody aftermath demonstrate that. Cairo II has already closed the files of the Hebron massacre. In the absence of an impartial investigation, and given the revelations that Israeli soldiers and police are not allowed to shoot at settlers even if the settlers are shooting at Palestinians, the security arrangements for Hebron in Cairo II will testify to a strange harmony between victim and victimiser.

Every single demand touted by the PLO in the wake of the massacre (international protection, dismantling of Hebron settlements and placing settlements immediately on the interim phase agenda) was predictably surrendered at Cairo. Again Israeli responsibility for overall security was re-

confirmed as the token 160 observers were declared a substitute for the requested international force. This group has no military or police functions; it is unarmed; its freedom of movement is restricted by Israel; the renewal of its mandate is subject to Israeli veto. It is responsible not to the U.N. secretary-general but to the "joint Hebron committee" of two Israelis and two Palestinians. The make-up and functions of the force make a mockery of the concept of international protection. As the centrepiece of Cairo II, this new and strange dimension of international protection was enshrined as a provision to bypass the Geneva Conventions.

The same strategy was applied by Israel in Cairo I on settlements. Again playing on the concept of security in Article VIII of the DoP and the two-stage formula, Israel effected a startling achievement regarding settlements in Gaza: 16 settlements occupying 18 sq km which seemed dispensable to Israel during the Washington rounds, have not only been given a new lease of life but also provided with an additional 22 sq km of land.

Article VII of the DoP was also used to gain this effective acknowledgement by the PLO that settlements constitute an internal Israeli matter. "The withdrawal of the military government will not prevent Israel from exercising the powers and responsibilities not transferred to the Council."

The trappings of statehood

In their haste to demonstrate some success to constituents whose opposition to the DoP has grown enormously since the Hebron massacre, Palestinian negotiators have sacrificed crucial principles. Consistent with Cairo I and II, the third Cairo agreement is replete with make-believe elements of statehood. Just as Cairo I invented the symbolic entry stamps and immigration officers, Cairo II invented such ornaments as a passport which has the familiar phrase "laissez-passer" written on the top. As stateless people the Palestinians have become accustomed to laissez-passers granted by Egypt, and since 1967 by Israel. Now, residents of the Gaza Strip and Jericho will be receiving Palestinian laissez-passers instead, although the word "passport" appears on the cover under "laissez-passer". Palestinian postage stamps will be issued inscribed "Palestinian authority". Telephone calls to Jericho and Gaza will go through the

Israeli network. And the list of embellishments goes on and on, yet Israel did not hesitate to draw red lines where the trappings could conceivably be construed as symbols of sovereignty.

Likewise, the Palestinian Monetary Authority, which was created by the Paris economic accord on April 28 1994, is presumed to be something of a central bank, but the Palestinians were denied the right to issue their own currency. Meanwhile the phrase "economic cooperation", which appears frequently in the DoP, is being utilised by Israel to ensure the continued dependency of the Palestinian economy on that of Israel. "Cooperation" is hardly the description of a relationship between an economy with a \$63bn gross domestic product (GDP) and another with a mere \$2bn GDP, two-thirds of which is derived from work in Israel. This kind of cooperation will be used by Israel to safeguard against Palestinian economic independence and to reinforce the solid restrictions on political independence as well.

The public discourse of the past two months have made it clear that whatever mandate existed for the negotiations from the Palestine National Council (PNC) or the PLO Central Council is now in doubt. The most recent initiative by the Movement for Reform and Democracy in the territories condemns the Cairo agreements as having conferred legitimacy on illegal measures undertaken by Israel during the past 27 years of occupation. Those who initially signed its petition on April 25 include a number of former negotiators, chief among them Haidar Abdul Shafi. They appealed to the Palestinian people to consider the Cairo agreement non-binding and null and void. The movement is beginning to emerge as a third force in the territories, offering an alternative to Mr. Arafat's Fateh and Hamas.

But in the face of that Mr. Arafat conducts business as if the U.S. and Israel were the source of his legitimacy. His acceptance of the Israeli interpretation of the Oslo accords has shattered the post-Madrid Palestinian consensus. Also, having renounced resistance as a form of terrorism and having accepted Washington's dictates as to which acts deserve commendation and which ones require condemnation, Mr. Arafat has effectively abdicated his role as leader of a dispossessed, disenfranchised and dismembered nation entitled to redress.

Middle East International

Weekender

Theatre vs audience — a vicious circle

By Mohammad Mashariqah

"Jordanian theatre versus Jordanian audience" is a unique issue and any attempt to deal with it would end up with one going in a vicious circle.

In my view, three parties should be held responsible for lack of public interest in theatre work: the Ministry of Culture, the Jordanian theatre audience and the theatre people themselves. But each is trying to shift the blame on the other.

In discussing this issue with playwrights, producers or actors, one can only feel they are filled with pain, indignation and frustration, and they harbour no hope of ever seeing a theatre filled with audiences or of witnessing the dawn of a real artistic and cultural renaissance in Jordan.

Asks Subeil Elias who has established Amman Theatre: Does this society need a theatre?

"Having passed through 28 years of non-stop work in the field of theatre, people view me with astonishment as if I have fallen from another planet," says Elias, adding: "Indeed after this long experience, I have come to realise that this country is not in need of theatre. A theatre or lack of it in Jordan does not cause state officials sleepless nights."

"Only when they are in office, do culture ministers visit theatres and seldom are they seen afterwards following up on any artistic or cultural work, let alone keeping their promises," Elias says.

Initially established as a department to cater to the requirements of arts and theatre work, this institution has gradually grown into a full-fledged ministry for culture and arts with an army of officials, but with little of its funds benefiting the cause of culture and arts, according to Elias.

Why, he asks, the government "is in the practice of allocating JD 1 million annually to the ministry which does nothing, when it could be spending this huge sum

on 10 different artistic and cultural groups which are capable of rising to the occasion and capable of presenting a refined taste of modern cultural and artistic work covering all themes and pleasing all tastes?"

"We are not in need of luxurious buildings, cars, or travel expenses which are consuming 88 per cent of the ministry's annual budget," says Elias.

"We feel ashamed to mention the very limited number of theatre goers in Jordan and it is not a secret to say that out of a million Ammanites, 600 frequent theatres," notes Elias.

Regarded as one of the founders of Jordanian theatre in the early sixties, Elias received training in London and only a month ago he was able to open the Amman Theatre with financial support from a private firm.

His initial work was a comedy entitled *Taboo*. Taboo with a simple message presented within the context of a merry atmosphere. "But it was a hard

Indeed plays like "Abnan Salam" and "Abnan Budget" which have continued for several consecutive months attracted a large audience. Hisham Yanes, one of the main actors in Nabil and Hisham Theatre says his theatre has been successful simply because it tackles issues of concern to the public.

"We care to present our plays in a satirical manner without offending any person and this has been accepted by the audience to a large extent," Yanes says.

Another play that has been attracting large audiences is "Harat Abu Awad" which is presented at the Stars Theatre. The play, founded by the main character in the play Nabil Al Mashini, had been presented in different forms on Jordan Television and also won public favour because it used to tackle issues of concern to the public.

These two examples indicate that it is the nature and the theme of the play that is of interest to the public. But at the same time one wonders why some of the great works did not meet with any success, forcing their actors and producers to close down the play and incurring huge financial losses.

One has to admit the bitter fact that the Jordanian audience is more interested in entertainment or comedy programmes, especially those that direct criticism at individuals or institutions or regimes. This audience, which is more accustomed to television, seems to be lacking any interest in other types of theatre work about which it knows very little.

Elias says: "We must start to acquaint people to theatre work right from early stages of school education where we can instil in the minds of the young the love for culture and arts."

"We might also need to encourage not only the entertainment theatre works but rather more serious types of plays which carry humanitarian messages to society," according to Fathi Abdul Rahman, founder and director of the "60-Chair Theatre" in Amman.

He says that the state's assistance in encouraging and

AMMAN CULTURAL PULSE

experience because the theatre audience barely exceeded the actors on stage," says Elias. "It seems people prefer clownish entertainment."

Critic Jamal Ayad who has been following the development of the Jordanian theatre says the problem does not lie in Elias's play or the actors who presented it on the stage.

"This is a problem facing the Jordanian theatres in general and the producers face a heroic task of marketing their production through advertising in the press, radio and television especially since Jordanians are not used to going to theatre as the case is in other countries," he says.

Ayad still asks: "Why has Nabil and Hisham Theatre achieved successes and has ensured continuity and an acceptable margin of profits?"



Subeil Elias

promoting serious theatre work is required at this stage, simply because it is no more possible for private groups to survive merely on selling entry tickets.

Abdul Rahman suggests that the state provide steady financial assistance to the local private theatres and offer facilities to encourage their work to continue and be presented in the Kingdom and abroad.

Construction workers find evidence of ancient harbour at pyramids

By Mimi Mann
The Associated Press

NAZLETT EL-SESE, Egypt — Construction workers digging in a neighbourhood near the Sphinx have found the remains of an ancient harbour where men and stones were ferried in to build the Great Pyramid of Pharaoh Cheops.

"It changes history, everything we've ever believed. It's a wonderful discovery," said Zahi Hawass, antiquities director of the pyramids area and Sphinx. Archaeologists long have assumed that a harbour would have been essential for the pyramid builders to have transported massive building blocks and finer stones to Giza Plateau.

Granite arrived on Nile River barges after 440-mile (700-kilometre) journeys northward from Aswan's royal quarries.

It was believed that one large harbour serviced the plateau, crowned by the three Giza pyramids and at least eight smaller pyramids. That is the account in history books and sketches of the sites.

In 1978 geologists located a possible harbour at the foot of the plateau in front of the Sphinx. The latest discovery, made in February, indicates the three main pyramids each had separate harbours, a big surprise for Mr. Hawass and other Egyptologists.

The large pyramids honoured Pharaohs Cheops, his

son Chephren and grandson Mycerinus. Egyptologists believe the pyramids were built simultaneously over a 70-year period, beginning about 2551 B.C. Separate harbours meant work could be channelled to each pyramid, making construction far more efficient and coordinated than previously believed.

Hundreds of thousands of stones, most weighing 20 tonnes but some as much as 400 tonnes, went into building the pyramids, the Sphinx, tombs, temples and other structures at the plateau.

The new find is a section of huge blocks that form a wall 231 feet long and 10 feet wide (70 metres long and 3 metres wide), the

style "absolutely from Cheops' time," Mr. Hawass said.

Mr. Hawass believes the wall is part of a huge retaining wall that channelled Nile water into a harbour below Cheops' pyramid. From the water's edge, workers hauled the massive blocks up the plateau to the work site.

The find was made when labourers dug foundations for planned apartment buildings in the working-class neighbourhood of Nazlett El Sese, a five-minute drive from the Sphinx. Construction was stopped.

Buried beneath three feet of dirt, the huge rock wall and stones laid as a harbour bed were awash in stagnant sewage water when disco-

vered early this year. A high-rise apartment, private garden and school rim the excavation site, eliminating the chance for archaeologists to trace the harbour's outlines.

Three years ago workers constructing a sewage system in the same area bit a similar row of basalt blocks stretching almost 60 feet. Mr. Hawass identified those blocks as part of Cheops' Valley Temple, which likely stood at the edge of a canal or harbour.

"This harbour is another Cheops secret that's been revealed to us," Mr. Hawass said. "There must be more out there."

Today the Giza pyramids appear in isolation, but in ancient times each was part

of a ritual complex. The pharaoh's body was transported — probably in a funeral boat along a Nile canal — from the royal capital in nearby Memphis.

From the harbour, the body was taken into a valley temple for rituals, perhaps for a primitive type of mummification. Afterwards, it was carried along a ramp-way for final purification rites in a mortuary temple at the pyramid's base. Then the pharaoh was placed in the burial chamber, and his pyramid sealed.

Ancient Egyptians believed the elaborate ceremonies were necessary to ensure the pharaoh would unite with the sun God Ra, giver of eternal life and protector of Egypt.

Bosnia's teachers return to the chalk-face

SARAJEVO (AFP) — Thousands of Bosnian school-teachers are working in war-ravaged buildings for the equivalent of one German mark (65 cents) a month to set the country's shattered educational system back on its feet.

Classes resumed within days of last February's NATO ultimatum to separatist Serbs that stifled the guns that had pounded the city for almost two years.

Teaching had continued in a random manner even during the bombardment, largely as a gesture of resistance to the besiegers, Education Minister Enes Durakovic said.

Three months after the return to a semblance of normality, the level and

quality of teaching was still well below pre-war norms but was "catching up fast."

Dwarfed by two bombed-out office tower blocks, the Isak Samokovlija School still bears the scars caused by the eight grenades that passed through its roof. The rubble has been cleared away, but the school's windows, like those of almost every building in the city, are filled with sheets of plastic.

The school works in two shifts, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Slightly more than 1,000 children aged from six to 13, divided into 40 classes, receive lessons five days a week. Since 70 per cent of them are refugees from

other regions of Bosnia, including 50 orphans, they present particular problems, school director Nedžad Nanic said.

Many have been disturbed by the war and have lost the habit of concentration. There are residual fears of grenades and snipers, and they are still largely under-nourished, Mr. Nanic said.

He praised their effort and discipline, however. They appeared to enjoy lessons, finding school a refuge in times of hardship. In the winter days following the ultimatum, when electricity was only occasionally available, they were happy to have their lessons by candle light.

The number of teachers in Bosnia is down by 45 per cent on pre-war levels, for a variety of reasons, notably defection or death. But so too is the number of children: 16,000 killed in Bosnia, 1,700 in Sarajevo alone, according to official figures.

At the Samokovlija school, two teachers had been killed and three badly wounded. The wounded teachers were continuing to work, Mr. Nanic said. The salary, at 500,000 dinars (one-German mark) a month, is poor even by the standards of Bosnia, where the average wage is the equivalent of three German marks.

Some of the teachers work extra hours in other schools. Like the children, they are almost entirely dependent on humanitarian aid handouts for subsistence. Some teachers have themselves suffered traumas from the war, particularly those who had children involved in the fighting.

Literature teacher Biserka Jakovic said the conditions — the shortage of material, the influx of new faces — meant new methods had to be adopted, generally involving a greater degree of dialogue with the pupils.

She felt the relaunch had been somewhat ambitious for the circumstances, with too many lessons attempting to cover too much ground, but that it had not come too soon.

The present period was one of transition, she said, one of preparation for the new school year beginning in the autumn.

With classes resuming at primary, secondary and university levels in all government-controlled towns, Minister Durakovic said, the main need was for materials rather than teachers.

Around half the country's educational facilities had been completely destroyed or severely damaged, he said. There was a dire shortage of textbooks and exercise books, which he hoped foreign aid would help to make good, but he believed that pre-war levels of academic achievement would rapidly be restored.

The frustrations of this book are, it is true, occasionally compensated for by useful insights. The penultimate chapter on the 1991 Gulf War is the most interesting, discussing the dilemma China faced in trying to maintain its traditional position as a Third World leader while trying to build up economic relations with the conservative Arab states, a task in which it has failed on both counts.

The author appears to have assembled so much material which she is anxious to include that she leaves too many unexplained references and unsupported assertions scattered through the book. Furthermore, the maps are at best unhelpful and at worst downright misleading, and there are occasional mistakes in romanisation and in matters of fact.

There is a much more thoughtful book to be written on China and the Middle East, although this one is a useful handbook — Middle East International.

Like their audience, they are forced to depend on the food handouts that they

mock.

Their spokesman Elvis J. Kurtovic describes their method as "the new primitivism": A blend of American rock culture, Japanese technology and Balkan tradition.

The ideas come from the street, Kurtovic says. They work out their sketches, renewing their repertoire from week to week, using the material seen and heard around them.

Things are easier for them now than three months ago: "It's hard to make humour when people are dying."

Monty Python on benzedrine soothes Sarajevo

SARAJEVO (AFP) — A man crouches near the water collection point, watching warily for snipers. A refugee in Zagreb writes to her brother back home.

Franjo Tudjman and Alija Izetbegovic sign a new Croat-Muslim federation into being.

Not obviously the stuff of humour, you might think. But this is Sarajevo, and these are the Nadrealists — the Surrealists — performing their latest series of sketches about life, war and humanitarian handouts.

The water-carrier breaks into dance. The "refugee"

is a man in a dress, with his hair in bunches and a high falsetto. "Tudjman" plants a sloppy kiss on the pate of "Izetbegovic", who wipes it off with a grimace.

A Surrealist in a tarbush and dark glasses sings, to a Balkan folk tune, a satirical number about Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, and is warmly applauded.

A T-shirted rocker belts out, to the tune of Born In The USA, a number about life in war-torn Sarajevo.

A boxer in white shorts returns to the fight, is battered back, returns, is battered again, and again, and again — Bosnia and the

beast, we understand. This is Monty Python on benzedrine, satire to a driving rhythm.

The rock heritage of the past 30 years is gaily plundered, from the Gypsy Kings to the Beatles. Everything is grist to the satirical mill: Foreign TV crews, snipers, power cuts, air-strikes, peace talks, UN-PROFOR, the whole panorama of Bosnia's tragedy over the past two years.

Jibes about the U.N. Protection Force are particularly appreciated.

The audience, many of them on the young side,

are packed into a formerly bombed-out art gallery now shabbily functional. The children have only a vague notion of what the sketches are saying, but they laugh just the same, loving the sound and the colour and the movement.

The Surrealists are seven performers and four musicians, a national institution at a time when Bosnian institutions are an endangered species. Formed 10 years ago, they evolved from rock music to radio clownery and then to television, acquiring cult status throughout the former Yugoslavia.

They remained in their native Sarajevo when the conflict erupted, continuing to work throughout the war and developing their stage technique as a result of the regular electricity shortages that took television off the air.

They perform free, twice a week, because no-one has any money — the average salary is the equivalent of three German marks (\$2) a month — and out of solidarity and a concern to preserve "the spirit of Sarajevo."

Like their audience, they are forced to depend on the food handouts that they

BOOK REVIEW

Beijing and the world

China Considers the Middle East

By Lillian Craig Harris

I.B. Tauris, London 1993, £34.50

Lillian Craig Harris' thesis in this survey of Chinese relations with the Middle East is that from ancient times China has had an interest in the areas as a security buffer; the first part of her book gives an overview of the situation up to the establishment of the People's Republic, while the second and longer part is a detailed account of the evolution of relations from 1949 to the present.

The author shows the continuity of the basic tenets of Chinese diplomacy as the world changes. Making the case that throughout its history, it has always "used barbarians to control barbarians", she shows how Chinese policy towards the Middle East was inspired in the 1950s by Beijing's desire to counter first the United States' influence in the world, and how after the Sino-Soviet split the driving force became its rivalry with Moscow. She ties this in with China's traditional self-image as the centre of the world and source of moral superiority that has enabled it to present itself as a champion and a model to the developing countries.

So far, all well and good. But the book does not live up to its promise. A work of this sort that covers two different areas of the world has to take into account that it is potentially of interest to readers with greater knowledge of one half of the subject than of the other. There is too little context given for what often enough amounts to simply a blow-by-blow account of visits and agreements between China and various Middle Eastern countries.

All facts in this book are backed up by copious quotes from relevant sources, but these are sadly ill-digested. An example taken at random: Describing Chinese reaction to Peres' handover of the Israeli premiership to Shamir in 1988, she quotes the Beijing Review — taken as synonymous with the Chinese view — as saying that "Peres had 'made no progress'". But in what? And how had China come to this assessment? It is true that a lot of Chinese political comment is either bland or obscure, but this is why a book like this should be reading between the lines and looking at the ideas and debates of the time. Indeed, there is even a need to remind readers of the international and regional context, even with events with which one is familiar, it is notoriously difficult to remember when they happened in relation to each other.

The frustrations of this book are, it is true, occasionally compensated for by useful insights. The penultimate chapter on the 1991 Gulf War is the most interesting, discussing the dilemma China faced in trying to maintain its traditional position as a Third World leader while trying to build up economic relations with the conservative Arab states, a task in which it has failed on both counts.

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There is a much more thoughtful book to be written on China and the Middle East, although this one is a useful handbook — Middle East International.

Julia Slater

Computing you will not fear

By Jean-Claude Elias

When young college students started taking interest in programming or operating large, mainframe computers back in the sixties, when even the mere concept of personal computer (PC) didn't exist, they were considered as wizards, geniuses, superior people anyway, with levels of IQ well above the common mortal.

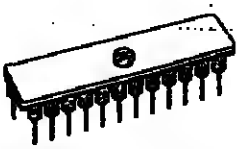
While the "others" would look on with fear and respect, thinking of data processing as sorcery, the initiated ones were discovering that computing was just like any other science, maybe funnier to practice but certainly no more difficult than civil engineering or medicine for instance. The obscure and difficult aspect of the topic was only its newness — nothing more. This newness, precisely, was the element of attraction for the young.

Since there was no personal computing at the beginning, the only users were the professionals who therefore went through systematic academic studies. The layman could not even approach the subject. The world was clearly, unequivocally divided into two parts, on one hand the authorised, trained specialists, and on the other, those allowed only to watch what the first were doing.

Enters the PC. With the democratisation and vulgarisation process, everybody gained access to the machine. The young, the old, the smart and the less smart, the trained and the unprepared. A new phenomenon, called computer phobia, became a major problem for all those who had to use a PC but were too afraid of it.

Since 1980, I have given computer training in Jordan to people from various groups of age, classes of society and academic background. Some of them were scared to the point of being completely blocked mentally and totally unable to assimilate even simple concepts. I have

chip talk



seen young women with their hands literally shivering over the keyboard. The fear of the computer is something very real. As all kinds of fear, it comes mainly from ignorance.

Almost fifteen years later, computer awareness has made a lot of progress within the population. The widespread usage of PCs in virtually all places has greatly contributed to a better understanding of the subject and a more harmonious contact with the machine. Still, those who are not naturally inclined to technology and who have not received a proper training are still afraid of computers.

The quality of the training and the instructor's psychological approach can make the difference between a successful operation or, on the contrary, a disastrous trauma.

The best thing that has recently happened in the country (in most countries in fact) and that should normally wipe out all traces of computer phobia in the future is the introduction of compulsory computer classes in schools. Children as young as 10 are given the chance to use PCs and become familiar, feel safe and comfortable with the technology. Computers are here to stay and there is no way anybody can escape from using them one day.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Sinqar

HERE & THERE

■ In Punjab, India, four women disappeared for one full month to evade a scandal. They were arrested by the police and were charged with robbery. To warn people of such dangerous criminals, the police tattooed each one of them with the word "pickpocket" on the forehead. It was funny enough on their part to ask the police to pay compensations that would help them undergo an operation for removing the tattoos.

■ More than 125,000 American ladies have already joined weight-lifting clubs, a fashion that prevailed in a bid to intimidate their husbands.

■ A Chilean woman has lately broken the world record in giving birth to children most of whom were twins or triplets. The highest birth number totalled 59 born within a span of forty-eight years of marriage. It is worthy of notice that Lontina Albino, the mother of these children, got married when she was 12 years old and continued to give birth until the age of 60.

■ Because Mohammad Ali Pasha, 19th century ruler of Egypt, discovered that men were deliberately blind themselves in one eye to avoid service in his army, he rounded them up and two special infantry regiments were formed of the one-eyed dodgers.

LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC GREETINGS

— Goodbye (G'bye) *Masallah*
— So long. *Wada'an*
— Be seeing you. (See you). *Ela-mulaga*
— Keep well. *Arjoo laka mawfior asah'ha*
— See you later (Soon). *Ela-mulaga fil-qareebi sahl*
— See you again. *Ela-mulaga murratan okhra*
— See you tonight/tomorrow. *Ela-mulaga fee hazihi-lala/ghada*
— Take care of yourself. *Itamann beah'hatik*
— OK/All right/That's right/Hope so. *Wahowa kazalik/Arjoo zalik*
— Good night. *Atamanna laka nawman had'an*
— Sleep well. *Tistah ala khaif*
— Happy dreams. *Ablam sa'eda*
— Nice to see you again. *Yasorrooni an algaqa thaniyatan*
— Hello! *Ahlan!*
— How's life treating you? *Kalifa taseerol-omoor?*
— I haven't seen you for ages. Where have you been? *Lam araka moazo mudda taweeha. Ayna kouta?*

TIME FOR FUN

★ I had a party for my son's fifth birthday. When it was time to go home I asked one little boy if he would like another cake.

He said, "No, thank you, I'm full up."

I said, "Take one home in your pocket then."

"They are full up too," he replied.

★ The teacher had set his class to write an essay on "A game of cricket."

After two minutes, James handed his paper in and was allowed to go home.

His essay read: "Rain stopped play."

★ "Waiter, waiter, this lobster has only one claw."

"It's been in a fight, sir!"

"Well, bring me the winner then!"

★ EVE: "What kind of a dog is that?"

ADAM: "It's a police dog."

EVE: "Well, it doesn't look like a police dog."

ADAM: "It's in plain clothes, that's why."

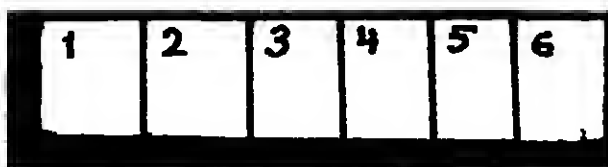
BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. What are the Pulitzer Prizes awarded for?
2. What does the adjective "diaphanous" mean?
3. What is eutrophication?
4. Two leading international sportsmen are nicknamed "stone-face". Name them.
5. The British call them the Falkland Islands. What do the Argentines call them?
6. What do the following have in common: killer, bottlenose, humpback, sperm and fin?
7. Mesopotamia means the land between rivers. Which are the rivers?
8. With what invention do you associate the name of Sir Christopher Cockrell?

TRY IT ON A FRIEND

- a) Sally Blount is married to John Crown. Sally's older brother, Barry, married John's divorced mother, Mary. What relation is Mary to Sally?
- b) What relation is Barry to John?
- c) What was Mary's last name before she married Barry?

RIDDLE-ME



My first is in WINDOW but not in PANE
My second's in WAGON but not in TRAIN
My third is in CHEWING but not in GUM
My fourth is in KETTLE but not in DRUM
My fifth is in LETTER but not in BOX
My sixth is in HOLLY but not in HOCKS
My whole, is a creature we often may see
Delighting the children who visit the sea!

APPETIZERS

CHEESEY POTATO HAMBURGER

INGREDIENTS:

4-5 potatoes; ¾ cup cheese, grated; 2 eggs yolks, beaten; ½ tsp. baking powder; flour (maida); breadcrumbs; 1 egg; salt and pepper to taste.

METHOD:

Boil the potatoes. Peel and mash well, or put through a blender. Mix with cheese, egg yolks, baking powder, salt and pepper. Form into cutlets and roll in flour. Then roll in the egg, beaten with quarter cup of water, and dip in breadcrumbs. Fry in hot ghee or oil till a pale brown.

And then there's Hani

By E. Yaghi

At times, I have chosen to question the standards of education in both private and public institutions. I always write what I believe in for if I cannot be first honest to myself and second to my readers, I see no point in writing at all. Some may differ with me on various issues. This is only natural, and after all, everyone has the right to his/her own point of view. This brings me to the story of Hani. At present, he is a student studying at a public university. He was born in a sprawling refugee camp outside Greater Amman and is one of nine children. First he attended United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) schools until the 9th grade and then was transferred to a government school where he completed his high school education. Since he has always been diligent and concerned for his studies, he completed his Tawjihi exams with an average of 94.6. With such a high average, he was then awarded a scholarship to one of the public universities. He is a quiet, polite yet shy student, forever attentive and conscientious. Though his scholarship pays for his tuition, he only receives JD20 to purchase books for the entire scholastic year. Not being able to afford the high price of books, he usually Xeroxes copies from his fellow classmates. It is only suitable to classify him as an ideal student for he comes to every lecture prepared and often obtains one of the highest marks in his classes in exams.

At times, he is requested along with his fellow mates, to give a presentation for the class which pertains material relevant to a particular course. His presentations are nearly professional. He has confidence, style and knows his material well. He gains the attention of both professors and students which he manages to hold until the end of his speech, all the while, maintaining a good eye contact with his audience, as well as writing important facts on the board to emphasise his points.

Professors must take special delight in such students as Hani, for he poses no discipline problem, is attentive, studies hard, and puts forth his best efforts in tests. In short, he is what every student should strive for. But the road to his success has not been paved with honey. It was sometimes rocky and stony, sometimes consisted of hills and mountains and sometimes raging rivers he had to cross. Yet, he managed to bear his burdens well and seldom complains. However, part of the difficulties he has faced have been due to his instruction in English by some of his former teachers. As Hani says: "One of my English teachers was not even an English teacher, but one who studied geography. Imagine what kind of English he taught!"

What were some of the other problems in learning English as a second language? "Most of my teachers did not know how to pronounce the words properly. One of the most common mistakes was between the (b) sound and the (p). The students in turn learned the mispronunciation of words from their teachers. This habit was carried

over to the university where even though professors may speak correctly, the student has a difficult time in unlearning his incorrect pronunciation of the English vocabulary."

How did Hani think gaining proficiency in pronunciation could then be obtained? "Often, students are not given enough opportunity to practice orally during the lectures. Sometimes, they might even be reluctant to speak either from fear of being ridiculed by their peers or because some of their professors may exhibit little tolerance for mistakes. But, how can anyone learn if it is not by making mistakes and then being corrected?"

One of Hani's solutions was to have more exposure to native speakers of English. This can be done through films, recordings, and invitations to native speakers to visit the classrooms. Native speakers not only give a perspective insight into the English language as a whole, but also act as unofficial ambassadors of their respective countries. Without even realising, these native speakers also impart something of their own culture to non-native students of the language by just being themselves.

One of the most important methods of learning a foreign language is to speak it. It is therefore essential that all students of ESL gain the needed practice through oral participation. Also, English departments could hold debates about issues of vital interest to the students and every department should encourage its pupils to participate in an English journal, for another important element in language learning is writing which is also often neglected. When students see their names in print for something they have endeavoured to write in a language other than their mother tongue, they not only are proud and want to show their friends and colleagues their accomplishments as well, but they also want to write more. English departments could also bold poetry and short story contests and the best works could be chosen and rewards given by presenting them to an audience of professors and students once every semester.

As Hani says, "we must speak, not just listen. When we make mistakes, someone must correct us. How are we going to learn? We must also understand the psychology of each professor and know his methods of teaching. Unfortunately, some want their students to just memorise their lectures and repeat in exams word for word what was said. This curtails originality in the students and forces them to think in a narrow manner. One of the best means to practice oral speaking is to make presentations in front of fellow students. This forces the students to perfect their speaking skills so they won't be embarrassed in front of their peers."

Will Hani make a good teacher? Definitely, but he is hesitant because there is a problem of discipline in schools that instruct teenage students. More than likely, he will study for his Master's Degree after he gets his B.A. Whatever he does, he is sure to be one of the best if his performance at the university is any indication of the kind of positive attitude he will have on any job.

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, May 19

8:30 Da Beat's On

Mubannad Al Jazireh reviews the London pop, rap, reggae chart toppers in his weekly music review.

9:10 Bony

Secret File

A wife gets a hitman to rid her of her husband. However, as the hitman gets greedier, he starts threatening the people closest to the wife... including her boyfriend.

10:00 News In English

10:20 The Last Bastion

Friday, May 20

9:00 Scene Of The Crime

Curse Of The Twins

A man from the past shows up and demands his share of stolen diamonds; this vicious hunter soon becomes the hunted.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Middlemarch

The relations between Dorothy and her husband sour.

11:10 Three's Company

The Holy Guest

Jack's hopes and expectations are soon baffled when he realises that the woman he is anxious to date is a nun.

Saturday, May 21

8:30 The Fresh Prince Of Bel-air

Not With My Pig You Don't

Philip's caring for his little pig as a child becomes the centre of a family discussion as well as an interview he gives to a magazine.

9:00 Varieties

9:30 The Campbells

The first ballot for the parliamentary elections between the two contenders Dr. James and Captain Sims results in a tie. One of them gives his winning vote to the other.

10:00 News In English

10:20 For Their Own Good

The true story of an American soldier who came home to his mother after seven years to find out how little he knew about his own mother.

Sunday, May 22

8:30 You Bet Your Life

A quiz show hosted by Bill Cosby

9:10 Stolen Lives

This is the day when Dawn's hidden secrets of her mother, Evelyn, becomes devastating news to her father. His strong disapproval turns her mother to a vicious vindictive wife who gives away her husband's own secrets at the ministry. Such scenes are still fresh in Dawn's memory.

10:00 News In English

10:20 The House Of Eliott

The two sisters are now back in London to run their House. However, the sudden death of a friend breaks their heart, but brings them unexpected fortune.

11:10 Feature Film — Stranger In The Mirror

The film tells the unfortunate love story between a poor girl and a rich young man whose mother doesn't approve the match.

Monday, May 23

8:30 The Nanny

Here Comes The Brood

Its brooding time for the ex-wife when she comes to visit her kids... and meets the attractive nanny.

9:10 Equinox

Homes On Wheels

A documentary that traces back the history of mobile homes, or caravans, since their beginnings in the 30's and the changes they had undergone until the present time.

10:00 News In English

10:20 39th Eurovision Song Contest

Tuesday, May 24

8:30 Step By Step

Trading Places

Great lessons are learnt when Frank and Carol agree to trade places with J.T. & Dana in running the affairs to the house.

9:10 Moon Over Miami

The amateur detective, Gwen, surprises everyone, especially fellow Walter, when she proves his innocence in the case of a murder of a famous TV star.

10:00 News In English

10:20 The Cape Rebel

11:10 The Second Half

THOUGHTS FOR THIS WEEK

You might as well fall flat on your face as lean over too far backward — James Thurber, American humorist (1894-1961).

To be what we are, and to become what we are capable of becoming, is the only end of life — Robert Louis Stevenson, American novelist (1850-1894).

One doesn't need to be a cook to criticise the cooking — Samuel Johnson, English writer (1709-1784).

Man is his own worst enemy — Cicero, Roman orator-philosopher (106 B.C.-43 B.C.).

In peace, sons bury their fathers; in war, fathers bury their sons — Herodotus, Greek historian (fifth century B.C.).
The United Nations was set up not to get us to heaven, but only to save us from hell — Sir Winston Churchill, British statesman (1874-1965).

2 Arab women artists stir London apathy

By George Sorley Whittet

IN THE most thought-provoking exhibitions to be seen in London for many years two Arab women are presenting in their individual works the intensely held views they have of the somber human conditions of their homelands, both past and present.

From Jordan Princess Wijdan Ali already deserves the gratitude of British art lovers for the most comprehensive exhibition, "Contemporary Art from the Islamic World" which she organised at the Barbican Centre here in 1989. I first

noted her paintings some fourteen years ago when she exhibited at a small London gallery and was impressed by her sensitive projections of the desert's immensity and heat, impressions that were renewed by the selection titled Calligraphic Abstractions in the present show.

All in acrylic and mixed media on paper, Princess Wijdan Ali merges the traditional forms of the Arabic alphabet in a personal style akin to that of the modern calligraphic school with her immersion in the rendering of the atmosphere of cosmic space analogous in visual

terms to musical and poetic modes.

In striking contrast to these contemplative images, Princess Wijdan Ali's larger works commemorate and recall one of Islam's most horrendous tragedies: The massacre at Karbala of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson Hussein with 77 of his family and followers by the Umayyad army. This 7th century holocaust is imagined and synthesised as pages in a chronicle inscribed in gesture strokes and continuous Arabic scripts entwined along blood-red swirling clouds against the blue firmament of

eternity. This is strong stuff compared with the bland and decorative canvases on offer by fashionable dealers. But Princess Wijdan Ali's arresting pictures are more than records of history in semi-abstract terms. They are the credible and durable

ART REVIEW

reflections by a gifted witness of man's inhumanity to man more subtly evocative than figurative conceptions can ever be through the subliminal power of paint in her imagery of art. Sharing the long room of

the October Gallery, Laila Shawa employs her media as effective instruments of information on present-day injustice and persecution, in her case the Israeli occupation of her home town Gaza and the censorship of communication between its people even by obliteration of the graffiti on the walls of the streets. Based on photographs taken on the spot, she has embodied the messages on large silk-screen prints overdrawn with her own abstract signs stressing the irrepressible public right to be heard in its own community. Adding to the authenticity of the documents-

tion English translations of the Arabic texts are available.

Laila Shawa's series of pictures of protest began years ago in Beirut where she worked producing popular studies of the environment diverting to cover the theme of prostitution and later in Gaza to highlight the attempt by a clique there to impose the wearing of the veil by women on all occasions.

"The Walls of Gaza" is now receiving wider circulation and support in the U.S.A. where prints have been shown at the National Museum of Women in the

Arts, Washington, D.C. In recent years contemporary artists have almost totally neglected the theme of the human condition in its most objectionable aspects of aggression and injustice.

The October Gallery exhibitions by Princess Wijdan Ali and Ms. Laila Shawa may be seen as a welcome beacon for world peace through outstanding pictures of purpose.

The writer, a London-based art critic, contributed the above article to the Jordan Times. The exhibition runs until May 21.



Princess Wijdan

From Hollywood To Hanoi - plea for reconciliation

HANOI (AFP) — Tiana Thanh Nga, an American film-maker from Vietnam, has come to preview her autobiographical film From Hollywood To Hanoi — a vibrant but controversial plea for reconciliation among all Vietnamese.

Her documentary was shown recently in Hanoi before a very select audience, including film-makers, Cultural Ministry officials and famous figures such as General Vo Nguyen Giap and former Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach.

The film expresses the feelings and follows the daily lives of "Viet Kieu" (Vietnamese expatriates) living in the United States who fled their native country after the Communist victory in 1975, but also their compatriots who stayed behind.

The story evolves from the personal recollections of Tiana Thanh Nga, who has become a popular actress in Kung Fu films and is a rock singer in the United States. She comes from an elite

family in Saigon that was staunchly anti-Communist and emigrated to America in 1966. Her uncle was defence minister in the former South Vietnamese government.

Filmed over the last six years, From Hollywood To Hanoi was produced by Oliver Stone, director of such films as Platoon, Born On The Fourth Of July and The Heaven And Earth, a trilogy on the Vietnam War.

Tiana, 33, said she was "sad to not have received the support of her family and the Vietnamese in the United States who did not understand my intentions."

"They were blinded by their resentment, and they have accused the Communists of having provoked all of this," she said in Hanoi.

"There is too much misunderstanding and despair for those we want to help," she said, referring to the "hard core" of the about two million "Viet Kieu" who refuse reconciliation.

At the Hanoi screening, Vietnamese Cultural Ministry officials said they supported the film's "positive subject" and appreciated Tiana's "good will." But they expressed some reservations about showing the film throughout Vietnam and appeared offended by scenes showing the massacring of dogs, a popular meat among Vietnamese.

There were also scenes of Vietnamese obsessed with marrying Americans, as well as scenes showing chronic depression during the dark years before Vietnam's economic opening.

"Some scenes should be adjusted to conform to the psychology of the Vietnamese," said the vice-minister of culture, Vu Khac Lien, who expects a "meticulous debate" before the film is released to the general public. The cultural minister is in charge of censorship.

Nguyen Co Thach, a former Vietnamese foreign minister who supports distributing the film through-

out the country, said: "It's a film that helps reconciliation. But this will be difficult because it shows 'Viet Kieu' who retain violently anti-Communist positions."

General Giap said it "was difficult to make a film that was applauded in both Vietnam and the United States."

Tiana has asked for authorisation to show the film here, which she financed by selling all of her belongings. "What good would it do if (her film) remains in the dark," she asked.

If everything goes well, the film will be shown in November and December in Hanoi, Danang and Ho Chi Minh City, according to an official from the Commission for Vietnamese Overseas.

Tiana is also making a four-hour documentary titled The War Is Over, A New Vietnam, scheduled to be released April 30, 1995, for the 20th anniversary of the fall of Saigon.



Tiana Thanh Nga

Thirties memories on display at London exhibition

By Caroline Brothers
Reuter

LONDON — No catalogue was on sale. No objects on display — and visitors were asked to bring their own exhibits.

The exhibition, mounted by four sculptors called Those Environmental Artists from the northern English city of Manchester, celebrated how the 1930s were remembered — instead of simply displaying artefacts from the time.

Viewers walked through a transparent screen of photographs copied onto sheets of flimsy gauze, and into a hanging garden of plastic news sheets suspended like jungle vines. A sound lab full of tape recorders encouraged visitors to record their memories for broadcasting on speakers overhead.

Called Those Environmental Artists Examine The Thirties, the show was held in a ballroom of London's South Bank Arts Centre.

"There are no actual objects there... no attempt to present artefacts. Even the photographs are copied onto acetate which is transparent — it is all fabricated," said environmental artist Peter Hatton, 37.

"Time gives objects an importance they may not have had when they were first produced. Here we are dealing with ephemeral things, with memory."

The approach was inspired by the Mass Observation Movement, set up in 1937 to hear ordinary people's views on British social life and to counteract the ubiquitous voice of officialdom.

By 1939, 1,500 men and women were jotting down and sending in their views on everything from ways of extinguishing matches to dreams, sexual behaviour, capital punishment and the budget.

The exhibition displayed copies of Britain's parliamentary record Hansard, newspaper articles and photographs.

Two artists were commissioned to make sound tapes bringing in world events like the approach of war, the 1936 abdication of King

Edward VIII, the Hindenburg airship disaster in May 1937 and the first royal Christmas message, broadcast on British Broadcasting Corporation Radio in 1932.

But in keeping with mass observation's aims, the displays counterpoised official memories with those of the man and woman in the street.

Some 25,000 questionnaires probing people's impressions of the decade were printed and many posted to towns and villages across Britain.

As hundreds of answers — in the form of drawings, faxes, letters or lists — flooded in, they were suspended on washing lines from rows of pillars and tracked on wall-display graphs.

People were asked to bring in any 1930s family photographs to be photographed and put on display.

"Mass observation contributed the idea that there's no one perception of any event or place," Hatton said. "There isn't one fixed point of view of history." The exhibition is part of a series of music, literature, art and photography titled The Thirties: Anxiety And Escapism.

The works of literary figures of the decade — including dramatist Bertold Brecht and writers Virginia Woolf and Daphne du Maurier — are being celebrated, as well as the buildings of the Bauhaus architects, the music of 1930s composers, and movies by expressionist and Hollywood filmmakers.

That programme in turn is part of a project called Towards The Millennium in which each decade of the 20th century is feted with its own arts show every year till the year 2000.

"It must have been a very strange time to live, with the war looming," Hatton said.

"(The decade) just seems to swing from one end of the spectrum to the other, from wealth to poverty, from hardship to luxury," he added.

"And the thing that really did hit me is that it really doesn't seem very long ago."

Taiwan's Confusion: A story for the world

By Michael Thurston
Agence France Presse

CANNES, France — Taiwan's entry in the official competition at the Cannes Film Festival tells a story of cultural confusion in Asia, but which will be appreciated worldwide, its director said.

Edward Yang, speaking an hour before the premiere of "A Confucian Confusion" here, said the film was about a specific culture, but has far wider resonances.

"I don't think its referring just to Taiwan, its referring to Hong Kong, Korea, Japan and Singapore, all the Confucian-influenced societies," he said in an interview with AFP.

And he added: "If I've done a good job to tell a human story, then people from other parts of the world will appreciate it... I wouldn't be surprised at it because we are all human."

"That's why drama is so interesting because its about humanity not just because were Chinese or French or British. It's a

document to look back on in the future," he said.

The movie, starring new faces Chen Xiangji, Ni Shujun and Wang Weiming, tells the story of a group of 12 former schoolfriends living hectic professional and romantic lives in Taipei.

The relentlessly urban setting — much of the action is set in cars driving from one apartment to another in downtown Taipei — contrasts with key artist characters who turn against the modern technological environment.

Yang says the polarity of the setting and characters reflects the cultural confusion felt by young people not only in Taiwan, but also other Asian democracies.

"There's a dilemma whether you want to do more about your life or whether you want to accept the intimidating pressure which puts you back in your place," he said.

"This is basically what all these societies... not the ones that are still developing, but the ones that are already developed, like Taiwan, Hong Kong,

Japan, Korea... pretty soon China is going to be in that position. This is what is happening in Asia."

"The West hasn't really realised this culture change. Every one of these states is trying to implement democracy," he added.

Yang, 47, is in the official competition on the Croisette for the first time after an appearance in the Un Certain Regard section of the festival in 1987.

But he insists he is not intimidated by seeing his film premiered on the first full day of the 47th Cannes International Film Festival — the world's biggest film-fest.

Above all he has no expectations of winning the top prize, the Golden Palm, he says, admitting that he has not seen last year's Chinese winner, Chen Kaige's Farewell To My Concubine.

Asked how he rates his chances, he replies simply: "I don't. I'd be stupid if I did. There's nothing I can do now. I've done my best to make the film. I'm happy about it."

Japan's dance of pain draws crowds in Europe

By Geert De Clercq
Reuter

BRUSSELS — It may be a far cry from Swan Lake, but it is still dance.

Butoh, a modern Japanese dance, is a marginal art form at home, but in Europe, its slow, haunting images of pain and despair have a large cult following.

Developed in post-war Japan, Butoh's dance-language is very different from western modern dance.

Dancers move slowly, convulsing, their limbs twisted, bodies naked and chalked white, faces in a grimace, an image of pain.

One of the leading Butoh artists is Carlotta Ikeda, who is currently touring Europe with her troupe Ariadone. "Yes, pain is important, life is like that," Ikeda told Reuters in an interview after a performance in Brussels.

Butoh literally means "dance of darkness" or "dance of the sombre soul." The first Butoh perfor-

mance often conjured up images of the nuclear holocaust in Hiroshima, of a Japan beaten and humiliated in the war.

Their dance language mixed the slow, shuffling steps and the grimaces from traditional Noh and Kabuki theatre with the individualistic approach of western modern dance.

"The images with which Butoh expressed fear, sadness and despair are more bizarre than any European mode of expression," said Dutch dance historian Luuk Utrecht.

But it is in Europe that Butoh is enjoying most success.

"Butoh is absolutely not popular in modern-day Japan, it is considered underground culture there. But here in Europe we have an audience," said Eric Lousteau, Ariadone's French manager.

Other groups, such as Sankai Juku and Byakko-Sha, regularly appear on European stages.

Ikeda, now in her fifties, started studying dance in Tokyo in 1960 and took lessons from modern dance icon Martha Graham four years later. She started her own dance company Ariadone in 1974 and first toured Europe in 1978.

She has been back nearly every other year since then and now spends much of her time in the French city of Bordeaux, the home base of Ariadone's technical crew.

Ikeda may be articulate on stage but she finds it hard to explain her art in words.

"In western classical dance, dancers try to fly. Butoh is the opposite, it is about touching the ground, about looking very deep within yourself," she said.

In her recent shows, Ikeda has tried to move beyond Butoh's sombre origins.

"I want to put a maximum of life in my dance," she said. "My dance grows away from darkness to reach light."

Murdoch sharpens Star TV focus on China

By Peter Lim
Agence France Presse

HONG KONG — Under the watchful eye of owner Rupert Murdoch, Asia's first satellite television broadcaster, Star TV, has embarked on making its own programmes to capture the vast Chinese market.

The move comes after Star, in which Murdoch's News Corp. acquired a 63.5 per cent stake for \$25 million U.S. dollars last year, dropped BBC World Service Television from its East Asian service and terminated U.S.-based Viacom's music format MTV.

Star TV, founded by Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka-Shing's family, has replaced them with 24-hour movies in Chinese and English to be beamed initially into Taiwan and later to the Philippines, Hong Kong, China, and Japan.

It also set up three music programmes — in Mandarin, Hindi and English.

Analysts said it was a natural course for Star TV, which is headed from AsiaSat 1, with Mr. Murdoch's specific target the 1.2 billion people in China.

Paul Lee, media lecturer at Chinese University said:

"I believe they wanted to provide more programme choices to suit the vast Chinese audience first."

According to analysts, Mr. Murdoch's ultimate strategy is to get into China, but Star must first cater to the needs of 12 million Chinese in Taiwan as well as the overseas Chinese in south East Asian countries, where they number an estimated 17 million.

"There is no doubt" China is Mr. Murdoch's target, Mr. Lee said.

"China will likely welcome Star TV's new tailored-made programmes as long as it is mainly enter-

taining and nothing about politics," Mr. Lee said, despite restrictions recently imposed by Beijing on the installation of satellite dishes.

This could mean incredible advertising resources, with growing mainland-based firms seeking exposure to the outside world, and vice-versa.

Some analysts said the scrapping of the BBC was in response to China's anger over the broadcast of a documentary about the sex life of late party Chairman Mao Tsetong.

As for MTV, they said its western music format of

rock and punk music was not to the cultural tastes of Chinese or South East Asian authorities.

James Miles, media analyst at brokerage firm Asia Equity, commented: "It is all right to say the overseas Chinese are programme testers up to a point, but it has to come to terms with the vast Asian market at the end."

The move towards the tailor-made product was probably due to success by Hong Kong's leading television station TVB, which launched a free service TVBS to cable subscribers in Taiwan last September.

"Television is a cultural thing," said Michael Chan, TVBS general manager.

"We have moved ahead to increase our programming... by increasing local production."

Star TV has also recently signed up a deal with TVB's rival ATV to provide more than 1,000 hours of prime-time drama, non-drama and special programmes over the next three years. ATV will also provide facilities to dub programmes into Mandarin.

"If viewers don't like the programmes, then Star TV has to re-think their strategy," said Lee, if Star

TV is bent on expanding its viewership from 170 million to 400 million in 1996 as reported.

During the nine months to June 30, 1993, Star TV posted a small loss but was "running ahead of budget," New Corp. revealed when it posted third-quarter profits.

"Star TV is going to be an absolute winner because Mr. Murdoch is living in Hong Kong," said Sydney-based media analyst Greg Cathro of Morgan Stockbroking.

Industry sources in Hong Kong, which is to revert to China in 1997, said Mr. Murdoch has been busy

courting Beijing officials in Hong Kong through local business tycoons who had struck gold on the mainland.

Mr. Cathro said Star was "perceived as being a good medium- to long-term investment," and losses in the short term were expected.

Mr. Miles agreed, considering Mr. Murdoch's talent at making profitable businesses out of the media and film industry.

"However, I will be surprised," if Star TV manages to stem the flood of red ink in two year's time, said Mr. Miles.

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REVIEW

The Building

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Wednesday, May

8:30 Too Close For

9:00 Prism

Local programmes

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9:10 The Best Of

Top television

Wayne Dobson

with glamourous

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9:30 The World Of

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10:00 News In

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Laser holds promise for nearsighted people

By Lori Valgræ
Reuter

BOSTON — Each year a quarter-million nearsighted Americans trust a surgeon's steady hands to make tiny incisions in their eyes to correct impaired vision.

That radial keratotomy procedure, invented by the former Soviet Union, is soon to be replaced by a laser system that makes the same incisions without the use of a scalpel.

The procedure, called photorefractive keratectomy (PRK), employs a blue-light Excimer laser to restore the eye to its natural shape.

In clinical tests conducted

since 1988, it has corrected nearsightedness so that patients can see well enough to drive a car legally without wearing corrective lenses.

"People like to be able to see their alarm clock in the morning. They are having the procedure for lifestyle rather than cosmetic reasons," David Muller, president of laser-manufacturer Summit Technology Inc., told Reuters in a recent interview. He said many patients want clear vision, particularly for sports like swimming.

Thirty members of the U.S. Navy already have undergone the still-experimental PRK treatment,

and other branches of the military are interested.

Mr. Muller said the laser treatment would have proven valuable during the Gulf War, where some soldiers wore gas masks with corrective lenses. In one case, Mr. Muller said, two soldiers mixed up their gas masks and were unable to see.

Though PRK is already being used in Europe, it has yet to be approved for general use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

"Since it could involve millions of people having surgery, the FDA wanted a protracted study," Mr. Muller said, adding that he expects approval within ab-

out one year.

In the meantime, Summit and its chief competitor, VISX Inc. of Sunnyvale, California, have had to contend with critics of PRK.

Summit's stock has been particularly vulnerable. Of its 10 million publicly issued shares, 3.5 million are held by short sellers betting that Summit's laser technology won't work.

But many analysts are optimistic. "I know the device works. They have data from 150,000 patients from tests over the last several years. The safety and efficacy is very high," said Smith Barney Shearson analyst Jonathan Cohen. "The market will reflect the com-

pany's prospects and profitability regardless of short-term dislocations."

Summit quieted critics on March 21 when it won conditional approval to use its Excimer laser for a more limited application, photorefractive keratectomy (PRK), which could replace painful corneal transplant surgery.

The Waltham, Massachusetts-based company subsequently sent in additional information requested by the FDA, and is now awaiting final approval, which could take until end-June.

However, the big payoff is in treating myopia. Mr. Muller is trying to get the FDA's Ophthalmic Advis-

ory Panel to review the PRK application at its October meeting.

"Our ultimate business prospects are in getting approval for refractive surgery," Mr. Muller said.

Treating diseased corneas is a modest market compared with the wider treatment of people with myopia — several thousand diseased cornea patients a year in the U.S. compared with the millions of people who wear glasses, Mr. Muller said.

But the lack of U.S. approval for both applications has put the brakes on revenues. The company sells lasers for both in Europe, but that market

has been weak.

The company attributes this to the continued weakness in international sales and its inability to sell Excimer lasers in the U.S. prior to FDA approval.

"This is clearly a transition year for the company, but Summit has effectively configured itself to address the wide market," said Mr. Cohen.

PRK uses an Excimer laser to reshape the eye by cutting out minute amounts of corneal tissue. The procedure, which can be done by ophthalmologists in walk-in clinics, involves scraping a small amount of epithelial tissue off the front of the eye about half the

thickness of a human hair. Afterwards the patient looks at the Excimer laser for a few seconds to a couple of minutes. The laser uses ultraviolet light pulsing at 10 times a second to remove about 0.25 microns of corneal tissue per pulse. Myopia is a congenital condition. PRK also is being tested for congenital farsightedness and astigmatism.

Patients have one eye done at a time, typically two months or more apart, and it takes two weeks to two months for the cornea to heal after each treatment.

Mr. Muller said it will cost \$1,500 per eye for the laser treatment.

Insuring good health in developing countries

GENEVA — Standards of health care in developing countries are still unacceptably low, according to the 1994 World Labour Report from the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Despite the improvements in recent years, infant mortality rates are still ten times higher than in the industrial countries. If the rates in the poor countries could be reduced to those in the rich countries, says the report, 11 million fewer children would die each year.

The industrialized market economies spend on average 8.5 per cent of GDP on health care, but the proportion in the developing countries is often much lower. In India, 3.5 per cent; in Sub-Saharan Africa, 4.5 per cent; and in Latin America and the Caribbean, 4.0 per cent. And though the needs may be increasing, actual health care expenditure has been declining in a number of developing countries — including Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tob-

ago and Zambia.

The report examines many aspects of the provision of health care, but looks closely at the ways of financing health systems. Funds for health care usually come from three sources. First, there is general public revenue which developing countries often use to fund basic health care for the poorest. Second, there are fees paid by the small minority of people who can afford private care. Third, there are funds collected through social insurance schemes. The report concentrates on the potential for expanding this third source.

Social health insurance usually involves contributions from workers and employers, and sometimes from government. Its great advantage is that it pools the risk. Healthier workers can subsidize those who are more frequently or chronically ill, and this "solidarity effect" is even stronger when those who can afford to pay more are asked to contribute more. Social in-

surance, as the report points out, is markedly different from individual health insurance, where an assessment is made of the likelihood of one individual falling ill — and the premium can often be unaffordable.

Social insurance systems are widespread in industrial countries. In Japan, France and the Netherlands, for example, they cover 100 per cent of the population. But in developing countries the proportions are typically much lower. In the Philippines, for example, 38 per cent; in Colombia, 15 per cent; in Kenya, 10 per cent; and in India only 5 per cent. This is because only a small proportion of the economically active population of many developing countries works in the formal sector where it is easiest to administer such schemes and collect regular contributions from employers and workers. In many African countries less than 20 per cent of the workforce is in the formal sector. In Congo, for example, taking into

account that each insured person has on average 2.82 dependents, the report estimates that social insurance could at most cover 4 per cent of the population. However there are greater possibilities elsewhere: In Zimbabwe, 29 per cent of the population could be covered; in Senegal, 31 per cent; and in Ghana, 41 per cent.

A social insurance scheme may appear to benefit only a small number of workers and their dependents, but its benefits will usually extend beyond this limited group. First, because the increased health funds it generates will stimulate the health system as a whole and improve the infrastructure. Second, because it releases public funds which can be more precisely targeted on the poorest. As a result, the report finds in the last decade an increasing number of developing countries have introduced health insurance schemes — for instance, Ghana, South Korea, Indonesia and Thailand.

Some of these countries have also demonstrated how social insurance can be extended beyond the formal sector. In Thailand, for example, informal sector workers can buy health cards which entitle them to free treatment at local clinics. In the South Korea the sickness insurance scheme now covers the entire population, including the self-employed. And in Singapore the Medisave programme has been extended to cover all low-income, self-employed workers. These systems are inevitably harder to administer than those for the formal sector, since it is more difficult to register informal sector workers. And they can also entail higher charges: Those who are self-employed, for example, have to make both employer and

employee contributions, so can pay 2 to 5 times more than salaried workers.

Any successful health insurance scheme, social or private, is likely to increase the demand for health services — as people expect attention for illnesses they might previously have left untreated. In almost every country, from the United States to China, health care costs tend to rise faster than gross domestic product and salaries. This partly reflects an increasing volume of treatment but there are also dangers that providers may take the opportunity of increasing their profits by inflating costs. So the report also assesses some of the different ways of purchasing health care.

One way is for a health service or insurance com-

pany to pay a set fee for each type of service. This is the system in China, Egypt, Germany, and the U.S. Other possibilities include payment per "case" rather than for a specific treatment — or payment at a set daily rate.

But one method which the ILO favours, is for the purchaser to pay a set fee per person — a "capitation fee" which covers the patient for a certain period (normally one year). Hospitals in Thailand, for example, are paid a single fee for each patient who registers with them for all their health care. General practitioners in India are also paid through a capitation fee for each of their registered patients. The report argues that the capitation system is very cost-effective. It is simple to adminis-

ter and is likely to be cheaper since it offers doctors no incentive to provide unnecessary or extravagant forms of treatment. It concedes that they may also have correspondingly less incentive to provide a high quality service, but points out that in urban areas patients who are dissatisfied can always seek another doctor (though in the rural areas it may be necessary to have another system of enforcing quality standards).

The report indicates the benefits of social insurance systems but it also emphasises the need for a "cooperative pluralistic system, including public, private and social insurance," if developing countries are to make the best use of their limited resources — World Labour Report.

Drug firms mix new cocktails as AIDS research stalls

By Ben Hirschler
Reuter

LONDON — Drug firms are joining forces to mix some potent new cocktails in the battle against AIDS — but a simple cure for the disease looks as elusive as ever.

Despite the hundreds of millions of dollars a year being thrown at the problem, progress on new drugs remains painfully slow. The past year has seen more setbacks than advances.

"A critical problem appears to be the lack of good drugs in the development process," U.S. President Bill Clinton's AIDS task force noted on April 15.

Although there are more than 100 new AIDS medicines in clinical trials, few show promise in stopping the disease.

A sign of the dearth of good candidate medicines is that the cornerstone of new "triple combination therapies" — using three drugs together — remains the controversial drug AZT, also known as Zidovudine, made by British pharmaceutical giant Wellcome.

Although AZT was criticised again last month by scientists for failing to deliver lasting benefits to patients in the early stage of AIDS, the fact is nothing better has yet come along.

Hopes that a new class of anti-AIDS drug, known as Protease Inhibitors, might improve significantly on AZT suffered a severe blow earlier this year when U.S. group Merck and Co Inc revealed its drug had held the virus at bay for less than six months.

So drug companies are now pining their hopes on combining sets of three drugs with different methods of action.

The plan is simple. By sticking more spanners in the genetic clockwork of the human immunodeficiency

virus (HIV), scientists hope to bring the AIDS-causing virus to a halt.

Dr. David Barry, newly appointed head of Wellcome's worldwide research, development and medical operations, said existing data already showed two drugs worked better than one — and the aim was to amplify this with three.

"Dual therapy continues to show an improvement on monotherapy, but these particular studies are hoping to pick up really very major advances," Dr. Barry told Reuters.

To test the theory, 16 pharmaceutical firms grouped under the International Company Collaboration on AIDS Drug Development (ICCD) are studying triple-drug combinations for the first time.

Dr. Barry, who is leading the ICC clinical trial subcommittee, acknowledged public frustration at companies' failure to deliver an effective treatment. But he said expectations had changed dramatically over the years.

"In 1986, when AZT was introduced, adding one, two or three years to life expectations was considered long-term... Now people are looking for two to three decades," he said.

AIDS activists have given a cautious welcome to the initiative, although Nick Partridge of the British AIDS support group Terrence Higgins Trust noted there was a risk that any benefits might be offset by increased side effects.

"We're hoping for synergy between the drugs but we have to be very cautious that there isn't synergy between the side effects," Mr. Partridge said.

The new triple-therapy studies were expected to start this summer, with results available in nine to 15 months, Dr. Barry said.

Other drugs to be tested alongside AZT in the initial

ICC triple trials are Hoffman La Roche's approved DDC and its unapproved RO 31-8959 Boehringer Ingelheim's Nevirapine Bristol-Myers Squibb Co's DDI and 3TC, which is being transferred by Glaxo Holdings Plc to Wellcome.

Peter Laing, an analyst with U.S. investment bank Salomon Bros, said: "Retrovir (AZT) is likely to remain the cornerstone because it's been around longest and also because it seems to have the lowest potential for the development of resistance."

However, even if successful, further trials will still be needed to test the theory that the best hope for those with acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is the kind of multi-drug dosing common in cancer treatment.

In the meantime, hopes are fading that a vaccine against the killer virus will be developed soon.

"There is no doubt that the development of a safe and effective HIV vaccine is essential if we ever want to control this epidemic," Peter Piot, director of the World Health Organisation's AIDS Research Division, told a conference in Florence, Italy, last month. "Unfortunately, I see signs of discouragement among those working on vaccine development. They say the science is not there yet."

More than 15 million people worldwide are infected by HIV, passed on through contact with infected blood or semen — and Dr. Piot warned that total could triple by the end of the century.

ANSWERS

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. Journalism
2. Transparent
3. The over-development of plant life in streams or lakes.
4. Tennis stars Ivan Lendl and Lester Piggot, the champion jockey.
5. The Malvinas.
6. They are all different species of whales.
7. The Tigris and the Euphrates.
8. The Hovercraft.

PUZZLE IT OUT TRY IT ON A FRIEND

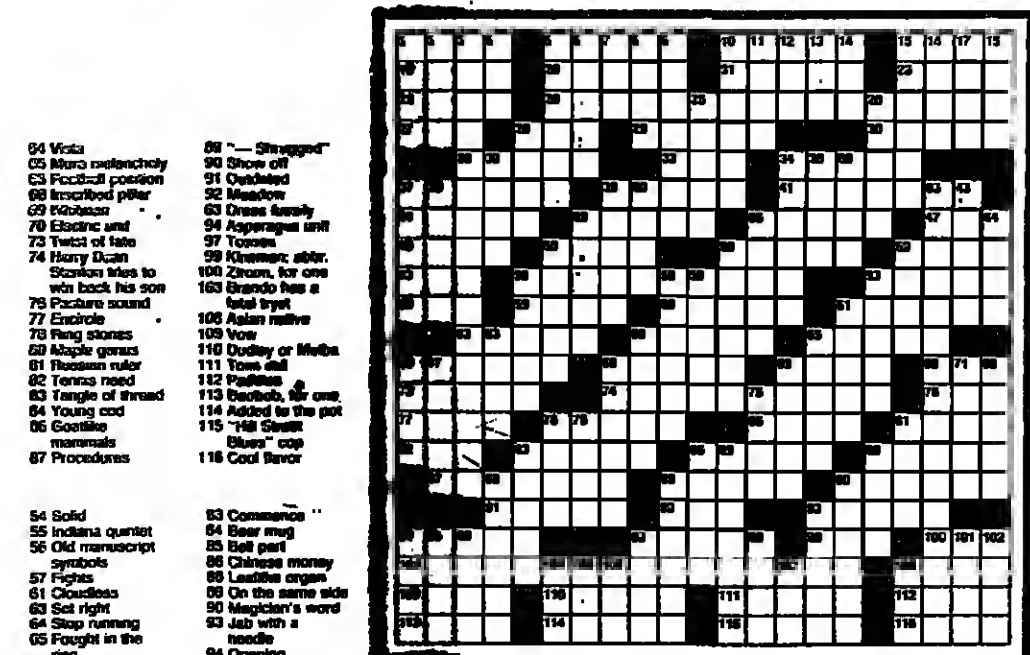
- (a) Mother-in-law and sister-in-law
- (b) Brother-in-law and father-in-law
- (c) Crown.

RIDDLE-ME
My whole is a DONKEY

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

CRUISE COMPANIES
By Thomas J. Marshall

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Last Week's Cryptograms

1. Young couple seeking new home containing more than one bathroom
2. Lady scientist operator is accused by yachtsmen of failure to practice "birth" control.
3. Backpacker in kitchen/breakfast and a pink fedora lacks the knack of coordinating his clothing.
4. Sad fact: Sheep gambol; people gambol; both get felled.

CRYPTOGRAMS

1. DUNG N YNTU QLPGLH NMU URNTGU
FNIR KILEVQRH NQEVHMT FH ULG GL
PFG FLHGT KIKLEGRILFH — By Sol Talerko

2. JIPSE KAGGTORLGT CBOGL CAGS
ORZZOG KIPWSE PWGL AGT QIXQX HW H
THE XIQ ZI WIQ PQ KAGTJZ WILH WQROO.

3. B HURKO B FBIWIE HA CII N GAFHAE LVA
RC LABOED BECHNG AW FENPHEPRED.

4. HOUSG HRE, BIG FELLERS LERBL ABIRN
MS GSOSGGSN UB EL "MEET ABLSUL"

CRUISE COMPANIES
By Thomas J. Marshall

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كنا في الحفل

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Likewise, the P... Monetary Author... was created by the... nomic accord in... 1994, is presu... something of a... but the Palestin... nced the right to... own currency. Me... phrase "economic... (ion)", which app... quently in the D... utilised by Israel... the continued depa... the Palestinian... that of Israel. "Co... is hardly the des... relationship betwe... nomy with a 50%... domestic product... another with a 50... GDP, two-thirds... derived from work... This kind of cooper... be used by Israel... against Palestin... independence and... force the solid res... political independ... well.

The public disc... past two months... clear that whatever... existed for the ne... from the Palestin... Council (PNC) or... Central Council is... doubt. The most... initiative by the Movement Reform and Democ... the territories... Cairo agreements... conferred legitimacy... al measures under... Israel during the p... of occupation. Th... itially signed in... April 25 include... former negotia... among them H... Shafi. They appeal... Palestinian people... er the Cairo agree... binding and null... The movement is... to emerge as a th... the territories... alternative to Mr... Fateh and Hamas.

But in the face... Arafat conducts... the U.S. and Israel... source of his leg... acceptance of the... terpretation of the... accords has shan... sensus. Also, how... nounced resistance... accepted Washington... as to which acc... commendation... ones require coo... Mr. Arafat has... abdicated his role... a dispossessed... and disorientat... entitled to redress.

Middle East

Meeting pledges \$200m

(Continued from page 1)

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... Jordan would... the Paris Club to

... completes pullout

(Continued from page 1)

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... Christopher briefs Mubarak

(Continued from page 1)

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... Damascus Radio... Syria's refusal to... the Golan.

... the official Al Thaw... which said in an... will not accept... presence on a single... Golan.

... offered a with... five-to-eight years

treat the Kingdom as a special case in recognition of fact that it had achieved strong growth in spite of the political and economic challenges of the volatile Middle East region.

"Our problem is that we are not described as one of the lower income countries. We are punished for our achievements," Reuters quoted Mr. Fariz as saying.

Lower income countries can win debt relief which effectively wipes out half of their foreign debt — so-called Trinidad terms — whereas richer middle-income countries like Jordan tend to get less favourable treatment.

"We hope (the Paris Club meeting) will be held in June and we hope we will get the best possible terms," he said. Asked if that would mean Trinidad terms, he said: "That is one option."

Petra added that the agencies "praised Jordan's development efforts, its handling of its foreign debt as well as its good economic performance in general, which was reflected positively in achieving reasonable rates of growth, decreased the budget deficit and balance of payment."

The participants, Petra reported, expressed their "faith" in Jordan's economic ability to move in the right direction in accordance with the economic reform programme written out for the years 1993-1997.

The participants also praised

Jordan's consistency in supporting the Middle East peace and contributing to stability in the region through its wise leadership which has laid the ground for spreading the principles of democracy and human rights.

Due to technical problems on the ground less than half of the money offered for Jordan in 1993 was spent, leaving between \$175 million and \$190 million still to be spent this year.

Mr. Gammoh said the pledge reflects the donor countries' and agencies' recognition of the pivotal role "Jordan is playing in maintaining the stability of the region" and its commitment to the peace process. Mr. Gammoh told the Jordan Times Wednesday that France has also agreed to convert 10 per cent of Jordan's debt to its investment projects in the Kingdom.

Mr. Gammoh, who held talks with French Ministry of Finance officials concerning the Kingdom's estimated \$550 million debt to France, said France has "expressed support for the Kingdom" and agreed to reschedule some of the debts due in 1994.

The Paris aid meeting focused on ways to ensure money allocated by donors is actually spent. It was attended by representatives of Qatar, Japan, Germany, the United States, Canada, Britain, Switzerland, Korea and Spain as well as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other donor agencies.

Palestine (PFLP) led by George Habash said: "Our men will not hand over their weapons as long as there is one Israeli soldier or a settler in the West Bank and Gaza."

A spokesman for the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) led by Nayef Hawatmeh said any Israeli settlers or Israeli soldiers who showed up in Gaza and Jericho would be attacked.

Meanwhile a settlers spokesman charged that Palestinian policemen have desecrated the Jewish synagogue in the newly autonomous enclave of Jericho, prompting Palestinian denials.

However, Israeli President Ezer Weizman took up the complaint.

Saeb Erakat, a member of the new Palestinian authority, who lives in Jericho, visited the synagogue and denied it had been profaned.

Security Adviser Anthony Lake has reaffirmed a U.S. pledge to help ally Israel minimise the risks of peace with Syria, including joining in security arrangements negotiated by the parties.

Mr. Lake stressed the importance of standing firmly behind Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Speaking to the Washington Institute for Near East Peace on Tuesday night, an influential think tank, Mr. Lake acknowledged questions about why the administration is intensively pressing for an Israel-Syria peace agreement this year.



Two U.N. soldiers observe the northern Bosnian town of Brecko (AFP Photo)

Removed from politics, peacekeepers try reason

By Susan Linnee
The Associated Press

SARAJEVO — On a recent rainy day, a French armored personnel carrier (APC) screeched to a halt at a Bosnian Serb checkpoint outside Sarajevo.

A hand sticking out of the left side of the vehicle held out a bottle of Bordeaux wine. It was quickly grabbed by a Bosnian Serb militiaman.

Two days later, the French officer inside the panhard APC and 30 men under his command were virtual prisoners of the Serbs after NATO launched air strikes against Serb positions around besieged Gorazde.

Odd exchanges such as this one at the checkpoint between Serb-held Hadzici and Muslim-held Pazaric sum up the surreal life of U.N. peacekeepers in Bosnia.

They're accustomed to hostile treatment by the warring sides, as well as angry criticism from the international community for not doing enough to stop the carnage.

But the 17,000 peacekeepers are spread too thin. As the war enters a third year, the U.N. role has expanded from escorting aid convoys to separating warring parties and guarding heavy weapons impounded under ceasefire agreements.

A French officer, who has experience in Croatia and Bosnia, summed up the mission:

"Our job is to get to know the people in the area under our responsibility. To calm them down, to get them to trust us. If they detain us? If

they shoot at us? Sometimes we have to shoot back. But mostly, we try to use reason."

The Muslim-led Bosnian government claims the United Nations is helping the Serbs by its reluctance to authorise NATO air strikes.

The Bosnian government even called on the top U.N. official in former Yugoslavia, Japanese diplomat Yasushi Akashi, to quit because he had authorised Bosnian tanks to travel through an exclusion zone around Sarajevo.

Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic, a Muslim, also has criticised Spanish peacekeepers for siding with Bosnian Croats in the battle for the southern city of Mostar.

Meanwhile, Danish peacekeepers, who repelled a Serbian artillery barrage near Tuzla on April 29, had been helping Serb farmers and supplying Serb road repair

crews with precious diesel fuel.

Such efforts to make friends with combatants or civilians on all sides of the conflict are subject to developments that on one on the ground can control.

For the French in bunkers near Sarajevo, for Swedish soldiers at the foot of Mt. Igman and Malaysians in Jablanica, the politics of U.N. peacekeeping is a murky subject best left to diplomats.

"Something everyone seems to forget is that we're military people, soldiers," said another senior French officer who also spoke on condition of anonymity. "We don't debate policy. We carry out orders."

National differences sometimes come into play in peacekeeping.

British, Canadian and Scandinavian armies are accustomed to a looser command structure in which

spoken orders can be acted on, he said. But in the French military, whose 6,500 troops make up the largest outside contingent in Bosnia, written orders are the norm. What ensues is often mass confusion.

Just how confusing things can get for peacekeepers was evident April 23 when a convoy of blue helmets formed at Sarajevo airport in a second attempt to reach the eastern enclave of Gorazde, then under Bosnian Serb attack for three weeks.

Col. Bernard Rousseau, a French officer whose attempt to lead the convoy into Gorazde two days earlier had been blocked by Bosnian Serb women, looked on in bewilderment as a tall Ukrainian walked up.

"I go first," declared Col. George Telezhenko. "Then you, brother, second," he said, patting Rousseau on the

shoulder. "Then the Spaniard — Hidalgo. Where is Hidalgo?"

A Norwegian medical corpsman scribbled notes on the required distance between vehicles, speed and who would carry the food.

Mr. Rousseau had just been replaced by the Ukrainian. Few seemed to understand what was happening, but all assumed it had been ordered by commanders.

Lt. Herve Manificat, a French marine, was in a single corps unit that entered Gorazde in Telezhenko's convoy.

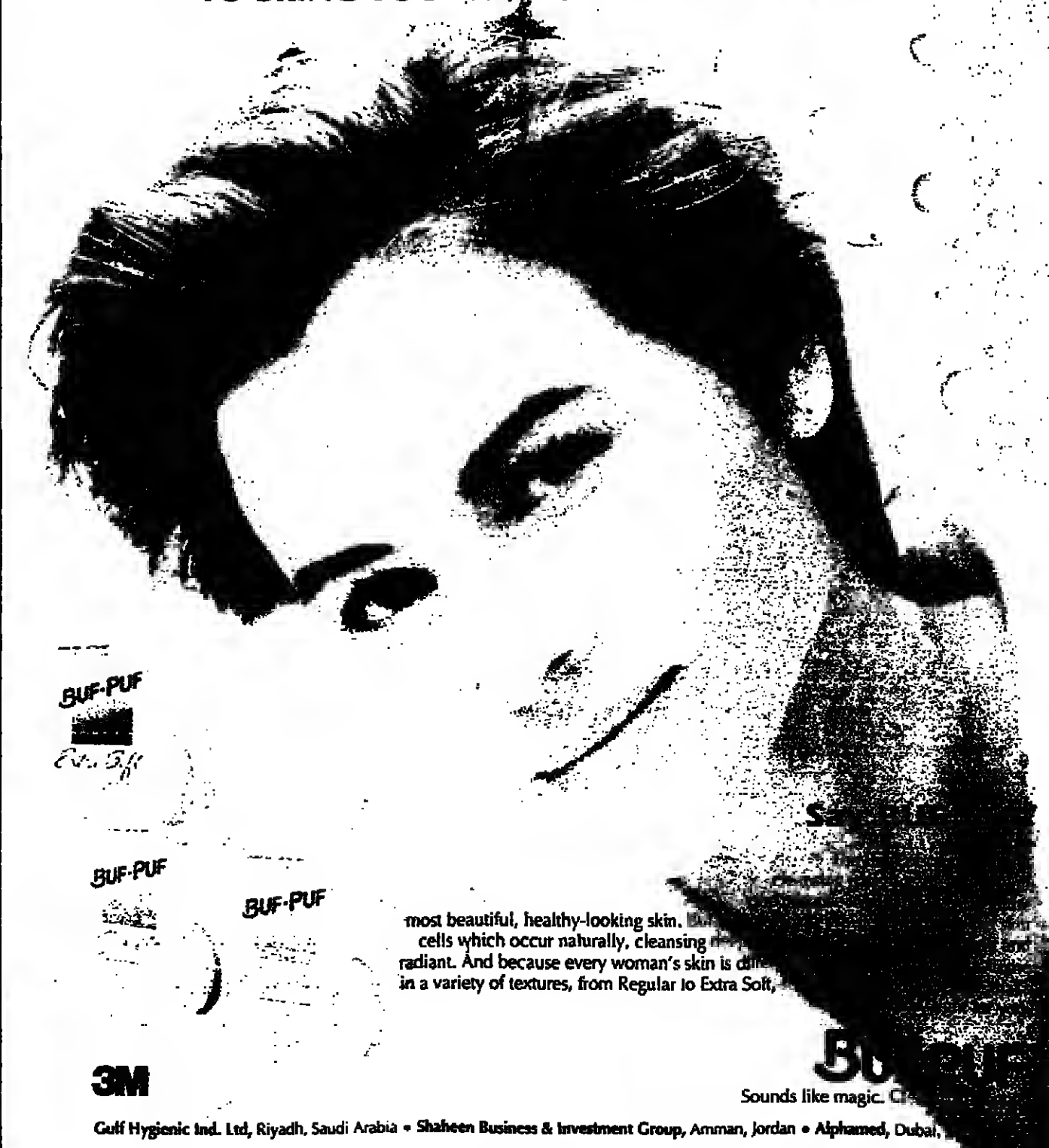
He was philosophical about the troubles peacekeepers endure, including being harassed, shot at or taken prisoner.

Something has to be done to end the war, he said.

"What we have to go through comes with the territory. We're soldiers."

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Amman Office: Jahal Amman, Third Circle,
Al Riyadh Center, 8th Floor. Tel: (6) 659102/659112.



Arafat

(Continued from page 1)

In Egypt, Mr. Christopher Wednesday called on Mr. Arafat to stick to pledges to end violence and asked him to withdraw his recent call for "total war" to liberate Jerusalem.

Mr. Christopher said: "It is very important that Chairman Arafat keeps his commitment to (denounce) violence and terrorism. It is important for him to understand the importance of the remarks he made."

Jordan Phosphate Mines Company loses JD20 million

By Samir Shafiq
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Following three years of declining profits, Jordan's leading industrial company, which is also known to be the Kingdom's main earner of foreign exchange, recorded a JD 20 million loss in 1993.

The Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC), which in 1992 made a net profit of JD 16.1 million, had been in financial decline since 1990 after posting the highest net profit of JD 107.2 million in 1989.

According to the JPMC's 40th annual report covering 1993, last year's adversities resulted from market liberalisation in India, low consumption in the U.S. and large supplies of fertilisers from the former Soviet Union at extremely low prices which did not reflect the actual production costs.

Noting that the situation in 1993 was a continuation of the negative effects resulting from the economic and political changes which swept the world since the beginning of the 90s,

the report pointed out that markets in eastern Europe remained constrained for lack of foreign exchange.

The report also pointed out that countries in western Europe were still moving to reduce the use of chemical fertilisers for economic and environmental reasons.

All these factors combined contributed to raising the volume of supply on the international market far in excess of demand, heightening the sharp competition among producers and causing prices to dwindle to levels unprecedented in the past 20 years.

Under great economic pressures and to avoid further losses, many industrial companies, engaged in the production of phosphatic fertilisers, were forced to close in Europe and the U.S.

Other companies in the U.S. formed commercial and marketing coalitions to cut production and selling costs in

order to maintain their presence in the fertiliser market.

The report highlighted that JPMC began facing difficulties in India, one of its main markets. Political developments here allowed new competitors, such as Israel, to enter the market.

Other developments in India were the adoption of a market liberalisation policy and the lifting of the fertiliser subsidy. Both of these measures squeezed the consumption capacity and capabilities of the Indian consumers.

Against all of this international background and taking into consideration the stiff competition from Morocco, Israel, Algeria, Egypt and Syria, JPMC's exports dropped by 16 per cent to 3.6 million tonnes, its lowest level since 1982.

According to the report, the overall international volume of phosphate traded recorded its fourth consecutive decline as it fell to 24.4 million tonnes in 1993 compared to 29.5 million tonnes in 1992. The amounts in

1991 and 1990 were 31.5 million tonnes and 37.0 million tonnes respectively.

Another indication of the massive decline in world exports of phosphate was shown in the report to be a 46.5 per cent fall from 44.0 million tonnes in 1989 to 24.4 million tonnes in 1993.

Traditional markets for Jordanian phosphate lowered their imports by 7.6 per cent. Exports of fertiliser from the industrial complex in Aqaba amounted to 526,953 tonnes compared to 558,000 tonnes in 1992.

In financial terms, JPMC earned JD 94.8 million from phosphate sales and JD 54.7 million from fertiliser sales. The total, JD 149.5 million, was 27.5 per cent lower than the JD 206.1 million earned in 1992.

After deducting operational costs, JPMC ended up with JD 3.3 million loss in 1993 compared to a JD 30.7 million gross profit in 1992. Other incomes and expenses gave rise to the 1993 net loss of JD 20.1 million compared to the JD 16.1 net profit posted in 1992.

Other figures appearing in the 1993 balance sheet of the company show the following:

— JD 176.4 million in current assets of which JD 78.2 million are receivables, JD 30.1 million of spare parts and supplies and JD 47.7 million worth of products.

— JD 62.0 million of fixed assets after depreciation.

— JD 45.0 million in payments on projects under execution.

— JD 147.8 million in total shareholders' equity.

— JD 62.0 million of long-term debt.

— JD 98.0 million in current liabilities of which JD 11.9 million in short-term debts, JD 31.4 million bank credits and JD 26.7 million of accrued expenses.

Although JPMC had JD 34.2 million of obligatory reserves, JD 52.4 of voluntary reserves and JD 27.0 million of other reserves, the company did not distribute any dividends for 1993. In 1992, JPMC distributed JD 5.1 million in dividends.

In addition to the difficulties faced in outside markets, JPMC said it was also burdened on the local scene in areas of employment, transportation of phosphate and payment of mining fees and other higher charges on "industrial water" and fuel.

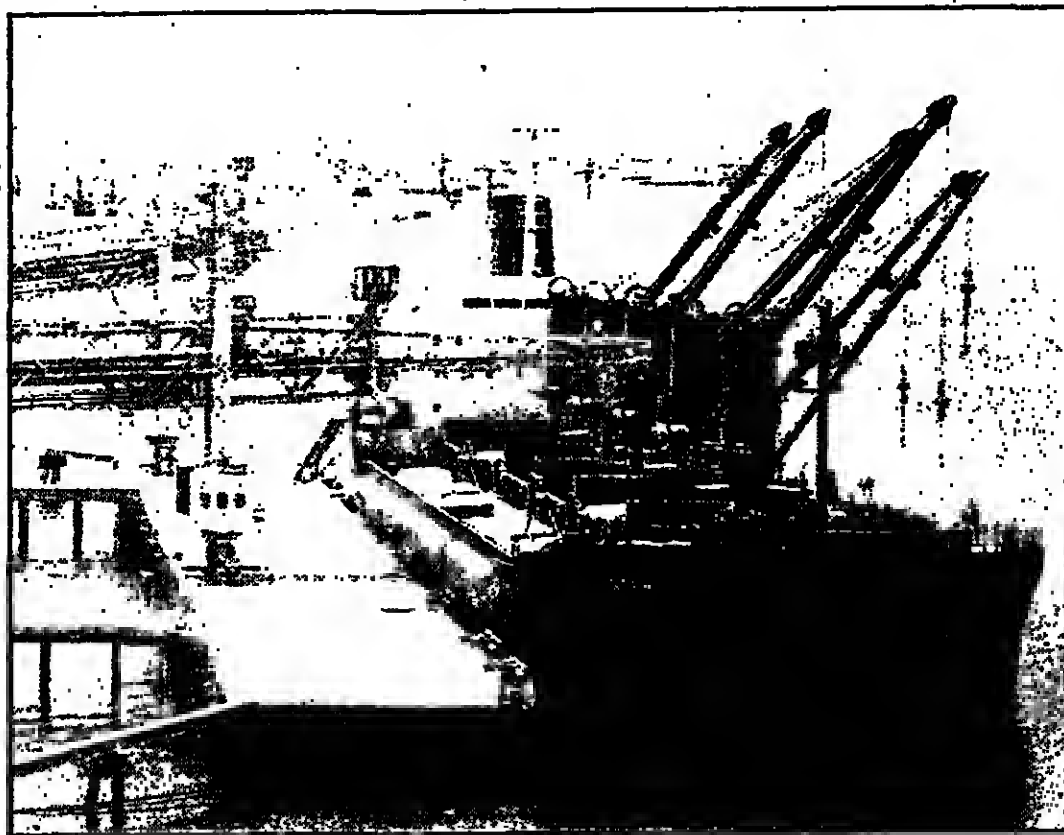
JPMC pointed out that it had to pay JD 1.1 million of fines on excess loads related to axial weight on top of higher transportation charges which could not be avoided as a result of amending load limits.

As such, the cost of transporting one tonne of phosphate by truck from Al Shidiyah mine to Aqaba rose from JD 2.350 to JD 2.585 while the transportation cost from Al Abyad mine to Aqaba increased from JD 2.450 to JD 2.620.

Consequently, overall road and rail transportation costs, including fines, amounted to JD 13.3 million in 1993 compared to JD 16.2 million in 1992.

JPMC's report mentioned that the company was employing many people "as a contribution to provide job opportunities to various qualifications and specialisations."

The number of employees at the end of 1993 totalled 5,667 compared to 5,564 at the end of 1992.



Loading a ship with phosphate at Aqaba port (File photo)

PROJECT MANAGER

BANK SETTLEMENT PLAN - JORDAN

The airlines operating in Jordan including Royal Jordanian are completing a feasibility study to implement the BSP in Jordan; A scheme to organise the remittances of Travel Agency ticket sales to the airlines, through a clearing bank.

Initially the post will be daily part time (half day) pending the approval of the feasibility study towards the end of 1994. Thereafter and subject to confirmation by the BSP Steering Panel, the post will be confirmed as full time.

Candidates applying to this post should have the following:

1. A minimum of 15 years experience in airline sales and marketing, finance or travel agency automation, 10 years of which must be in the Jordan market.
2. Attended relevant IATA Sales and Ticketing courses.
3. Adequate knowledge of IATA Agency Procedures and Resolutions and BSP procedures.
4. Knowledge of airline ticketing and/or travel agency accounting procedures and ability to review computerised reports.
5. Excellent command of the English language both written and spoken.
6. Good relations with the airlines and travel agents in Jordan.
7. A high personal reputation and standing and smart physical appearance.

Details of salaries and benefits will be provided after the initial selection process.

Written applications including curriculum vitae and references should be received by June 9 to the following address:

Chairman BSP Feasibility Study Panel
c/o Information Systems & Services Dept.
P.O.Box 302
Amman - Jordan



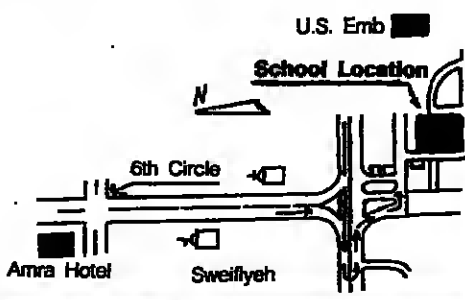
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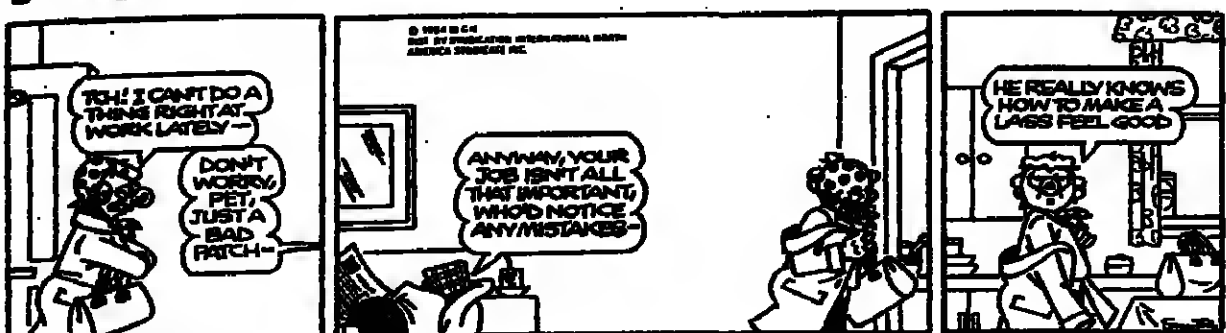
- * English & Arabic Languages
- * Sports & Games
- * Swimming
- * Field Trips
- * Arts & Crafts
- * Music
- * Camping & Hiking



Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff

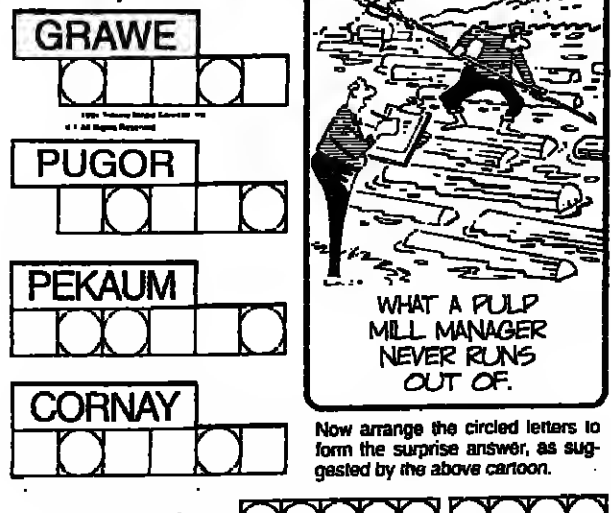


THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

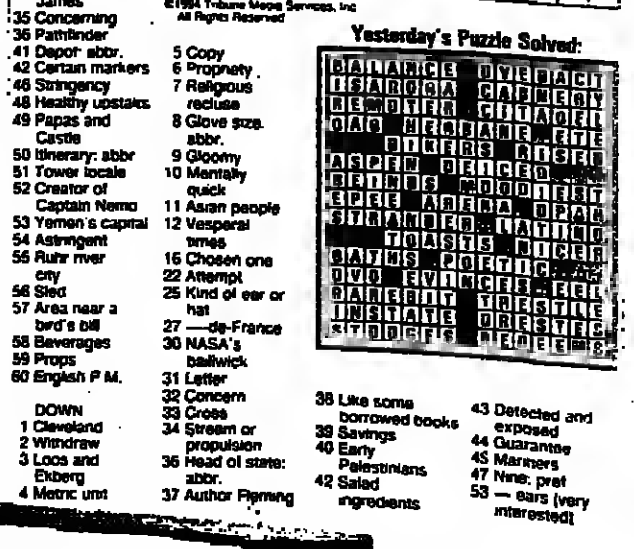
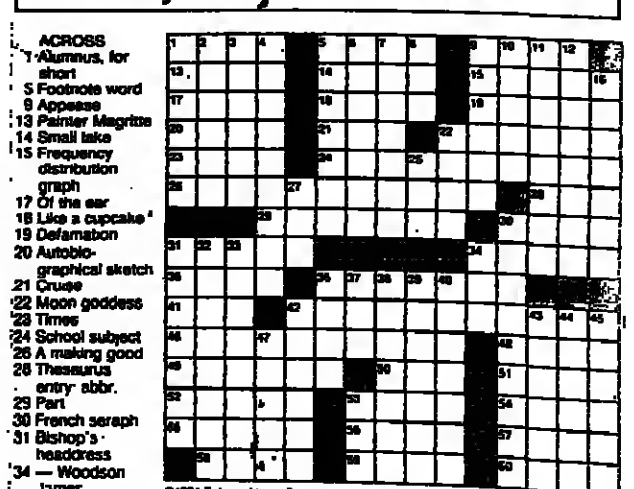
Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Print answer here: _____ (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: BASSO UNCAP TIPTOE DURESS
Answer: What the space school dropouts called themselves - ASTRO-NOTS

THE Daily Crossword by James Barrie



ما في حل

[illegible]

Milano
Restaurant
You Know
Our Pizzas & Sandwiches
New Try The
Italian Pasta
Milano Way
Spaghetti
Penne
Polonaise
Prepared to your own taste
Ingredients
For Take-Away
LONDON, W. 1, 0700

Bosnian Serbs appear ready to accept four-month truce

SARAJEVO (R) — Bosnian Serbs, responding to calls by major powers keen to restart the floundering peace process, have indicated they are ready to accept a four-month truce in Bosnia.

Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic said Tuesday night after meeting mediators Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg in Serb-held Zvornik that his side wanted agreement on a comprehensive ceasefire in Bosnia to be signed soon.

Karadzic said: "We discussed a possible comprehensive agreement on a cessation of hostilities which should be signed soon unconditionally. We accepted that from the declaration of the ministers from Geneva. We want the war to end."

Ministers from Russia, the United States and the European Union, developing their first joint strategy for Bosnia, called last Friday in Geneva for a four-month ceasefire and new negotiations to start within weeks.

Muslims object, saying a four-month truce would cement Serb gains in Bosnia amounting to 70 per cent of territory.

Exasperated by the deadlock, France, the largest contributor to the U.N. force in former Yugoslavia, said some of its 6,800 troops would be pulled out if progress towards a settlement was not made.

Mr. Karadzic also warned

the international community to stop a major Muslim offensive in the region surrounding the Muslim stronghold of Tuzla in northern Bosnia.

Muslim military commanders said their week-long advance was now threatening to cut off a vital Serb supply route in eastern Bosnia from Serbia to the Serb political headquarters in Pale, just outside Sarajevo.

A mortar bomb hit the U.N.-controlled Sarajevo airport Wednesday in blatant violation of the NATO-imposed heavy weapons exclusion zone around the Bosnian capital, the United Nations said.

There was no immediate information on whether the 82 mm mortar was fired by Serb or Muslim forces ringing the airport.

U.N. spokesman Major Dacre Holloway reported "no damage, no casualties" following the attack at 0923 GMT and said the airport remained open.

U.N. officials have expressed concern that the 20 kilometre heavy weapons exclusion zone imposed in February around Sarajevo could start to erode unless momentum for a political settlement to the two-year-old Bosnian war is recovered.

The Serbs however repeatedly ignored Tuzla's status as U.N. safe area and shelled the city centre and airport, most

recently Tuesday, risking NATO air strikes and forcing the U.N. to postpone one flight scheduled for Wednesday morning.

The U.N. said however it would nevertheless keep on flying to the Bosnian government's northern stronghold and a spokesman said the cargo planes would be accompanied by NATO jets.

Seven Serb tank rounds struck Tuzla Airport Tuesday minutes after the arrival of the first U.N. plane there since the airport was officially reopened in March.

No one was hurt although one of the shells landed some 200 metres from the plane which brought in U.S. radar. The local U.N. commander in Tuzla was angry after U.N. officials Tuesday turned down his request for air strikes, U.N. spokesman in Sarajevo Roh Amnink said.

The weather was clear, the target was identified but Bosnia U.N. Commander Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose and U.N. special envoy Yasushi Akashi together made the decision not to call in air support after speaking with Serb political and military leaders, Maj. Amnink said.

"We were prepared with tactical planes in the air who could spot the target... we did not retaliate. Because the answer (to U.N. appeals) was sufficiently positive enough and the attack stopped," he

said. Maj. Amnink also said Turkish and Pakistani troops could be used to bolster the U.N. presence around Tuzla.

This is bound to anger the Serbs who see Turkey as taking sides with the mainly-Muslim government in Sarajevo.

NATO carried out two air strikes against Serb troops attacking Gorazde a month ago, but the United Nations has been anxious not to escalate the fighting by calling in more such raids as Bosnian peace talks hang in balance.

Meanwhile United Nations civilian police were investigating the killing of a Ukrainian soldier shot dead while guarding a U.N. post near Gorazde, a U.N. military spokesman said Wednesday.

The Ukrainian died about 30 minutes after being shot by an unknown assailant south of Gorazde town Tuesday, the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) said in Sarajevo.

He had been guarding the U.N. base for Ukrainian troops deployed in Gorazde as part of a multinational contingent to enforce a ceasefire between Muslim-led and Serb forces.

The Ukrainian was shot in the abdomen and chest. A Nordic medical team arrived at the scene for emergency treatment but the soldier was pronounced dead, Maj. Holloway said.



A Bosnian Serb soldier fires a machinegun from his position on a front line in the Majevica Mountains, overlooking the Muslim-held town of Tuzla (AFP photo).

Cambodia leaders to attend peace talks

PHNOM PENH (Agencies) — Cambodia's top officials will attend a new roundtable peace summit in the North Korean capital this month, but diplomats and government officials Wednesday expressed doubts about its chances of success.

"Yes we will go — three people," said Second Prime Minister Hun Sen.

The three include himself, first Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh and National Assembly Chairman, Chea Sim.

Mr. Hun Sen said the Khmer Rouge's nominal leader Khieu Samphan had so far not replied to an invitation to attend, although the signing of talks outside Cambodia was welcomed by the rebels.

Cambodia's political leaders were at Phnom Penh International Airport to bid farewell to head of state King Norodom Sihanouk, who left for Beijing Wednesday to renew his medical treatment for a range of physical ailments.

King Sihanouk, reversing an earlier threat to disassociate himself from the country's political strife, Tuesday proposed a new round of "unconditional" peace talks to be held at his palace in Pyongyang from May 27-31.

"As the ceasefire I have proposed cannot be realised at the moment, I have proposed a round table (without a ceasefire precondition) at my residence of Chhang So On in Pyongyang in 10 days," he said.

King Sihanouk had earlier proposed a conference be held outside Cambodia to satisfy Khmer Rouge concerns about security in Phnom Penh. But the government questioned Khmer Rouge sincerity, saying

a ceasefire should first be declared.

Mr. Khieu Samphan then said any talks should be unconditional. He has rejected a five-point peace plan devised by King Sihanouk.

Mr. Hun Sen cast an immediate shadow over the likelihood of success at Pyongyang saying the talks would be based on King Sihanouk's peace plan.

The king's plan calls for the Khmer Rouge to declare an immediate ceasefire, open its zones of control and demobilise its guerrilla army. In exchange the government would agree to open discussions with the rebels and negotiate demands for a Khmer Rouge role in government.

Asked what would be discussed in Pyongyang, Mr. Hun Sen told reporters: "The five points of His Majesty the King."

Prince Ranariddh appeared to be more optimistic about a successful outcome. "We're going to Pyongyang because we believe we'll have peace and national reconciliation otherwise we would not go," he said.

A senior Washington official confirmed Wednesday that the United States is holding discussions with Australia and ASEAN nations about helping Cambodia defend itself against a new Khmer Rouge offensive.

Winston Lord, assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, said Washington believed the freely elected Cambodian government must be supported, preferably by a multilateral operation.

"We believe it is important to support that government because Cambodia is an example

of a successful U.N. peacekeeping operation and we want to make sure that success is continued," he told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) in an interview in Washington.

The United States was talking to Australia, countries of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other countries such as Japan and France which he said had a direct interest in Cambodia's future.

Referring to moves announced by Canberra last week to support Cambodia, Mr. Lord said he knew "lethal assistance" — military hardware — was under consideration. But he added that Washington was open-minded about what assistance would be most appropriate.

"We would welcome support for the government in various ways and I think it ought to be multilateral," he added.

He also echoed Australia's view that the Cambodian government and army also needed training, not just material.

"It's understandable in the wake of all the turbulence and infighting of recent years that the new integrated army needs training and a lot of help to be effective as a military force," he said.

"So there's a great deal of need in that area in addition to whatever material support may be provided." But he said he did not know how the U.S. Congress would respond, adding: "Any military assistance to the Indochina area has a lot of historical resonance to it and potential political sensitivity so we want to work extremely closely with the Congress in this."

Germany, Netherlands call for stronger CSCE

VIENNA (R) — Germany and the Netherlands said Tuesday the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) should be beefed up to tackle emerging conflicts on the European continent more effectively.

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel and his Dutch counterpart Peter Kooijmans told CSCE diplomats in Vienna that the 53-nation body was not a talking shop but a framework for a lasting security system in Europe.

Mr. Kinkel said the war in Bosnia had done more than any other recent conflict to undermine public confidence in the international community to take effective action.

"But it is no good blaming the international organisations for they are only as strong and successful as their member states are willing to make them," Mr. Kinkel said.

He said a CSCE summit in Budapest in October provided an opportunity for member states to strengthen the role of the CSCE as an instrument for conflict prevention.

"If the CSCE wishes to be a credible security organisation... it must be able to take resolute action in response to the threat of the use of force against the sovereignty or territorial integrity of a member state," he said.

Mr. Kinkel said the CSCE should strengthen links with the United Nations and the Budapest summit should agree — if necessary, without the approval of the parties to a conflict — to refer to the Security Council any member state found to be violating a prohibition against the use of force.

"The CSCE, with a membership stretching from Canada to Kyrgyzstan, currently operates on a consensus basis which critics charge has rendered the body weak and ineffective."

Mr. Kinkel said member states should accept measures the Security Council deems necessary to maintain peace and security and other European security bodies should be required to help support enforcement measures.

He did not specifically mention the NATO alliance by name as one of the enforcement organisations.

The CSCE originated in the 1970s and was for many years a forum for wrangling over human rights between East and West.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and breakup of the Soviet empire, the CSCE hoped to become a strong security umbrella in the post-cold war era.

Despite attempts to cool passions in such as Georgia, and Nag-Kooijmans forum identify

5-nation Pacific war games take on new meaning

TOKYO (R) — Japan's most powerful fleet is to take part in this year's U.S.-led Rimpac war games, which have taken on new meaning with the looming crisis over North Korea's suspected nuclear weapons programme.

The navies of South Korea, Australia and Canada are also joining the manoeuvres, held every two years and starting on May 24 in the Pacific near Hawaii.

Highlight of the six-week event is to be a simulated battle between opposing fleets on the high seas in mid-June involving about 50 vessels, 200 aircraft and 25,000 personnel, a Japanese navy spokesman said.

Two U.S. aircraft carrier battle groups and Japanese and South Korean vessels and planes will "fight" an "enemy" fleet of Canadian and Australian warships and aircraft, the spokesman said.

The first Rimpac, short for Pacific Rim, took place in 1980 in response to the growing presence of the Soviet blue-water navy in the Pacific. South Korea took part for the first time in 1990.

"Since 1990, Rimpac games have taken on a new dimension," military commentator and author Haruo Fujii said. "It used to be a preparation

against a foray by the Soviet Pacific Fleet, but now it is aimed at strengthening navy ties to deal with post-cold war regional conflicts."

"It is correct to say that this year, the games serve as a sort of preparation for a possible naval blockade against North Korea," Fujii said.

The Japanese navy and government, however, maintain there is no relation between the North Korean issue and the games.

"This is a regular naval exercise," the navy spokesman said. "It has nothing to do with the North Korean issue."

The Japanese force consists of the most powerful of its four 'eightship', deep-water fleets. Its flagship is Japan's largest and newest warship, the 9,485-ton Kongo, commissioned last year. Despite its size, Kongo is classified a destroyer.

Kongo is the only ship outside the U.S. Navy equipped with the American 'Aegis' anti-aircraft and anti-missile defence system, designed to detect, track and destroy up to 20 different targets at the same time.

The Japanese fleet will be accompanied by a submarine, a supply ship and eight P-3C Orion anti-submarine patrol planes, the navy spokesman said.

U.S. Marines to hold manoeuvres in Caribbean

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — U.S. Marines are to hold manoeuvres in the Caribbean on an amphibious vessel, but the exercise is unrelated to the situation in Haiti, Pentagon officials said.

Defence Department spokesman Dennis Boxx said 650 Marines were involved in the manoeuvres of undetermined duration on the assault ship Wasp, due to leave its base in Norfolk, Virginia.

The craft, which carries an undisclosed number of helicopters, was to make stops at U.S. naval bases at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and Puerto Rico.

Mr. Boxx said the manoeuvres should not be interpreted as a certain raiser to a U.S. invasion of Haiti, which has been raised as a possibility by President Bill Clinton and urged by some members of Congress to restore democratic rule.

"The ship is simply undergoing refresher training... It has come out from overhaul and it is now conducting refresher training," Mr. Boxx said.

The Marines will be on board because "That's all part of the orientation of the unit," Mr. Boxx said.

Meanwhile, to implement its new policy of giving Haitian refugees a hearing before forced repatriation, the United States said it had chartered two Ukrainian-flagged ships for use as floating immigration cen-

people. The cost of leasing the ships is between \$29,000 and \$34,000 a day, not including fuel and other costs, Mr. Boxx said.

The U.S. Coast Guard Tuesday returned 150 more Haitian boat people who tried to reach Florida because the new policy of screening refugees at sea was not yet in place.

Despite Pentagon denials, rumours that the United States is about to launch armed intervention in Haiti persist.

Mr. Boxx said the Wasp's manoeuvres had nothing to do with major recent exercises off the U.S. east coast involving 44,000 men. The Boston Globe reported that the manoeuvres had been a mock invasion of Haiti, something the Pentagon denied.

President Bill Clinton has asked British Prime Minister John Major for permission to use the British-owned Turks and Caicos Islands to process Haitian boat people fleeing to the United States, the Washington Post reported Wednesday.

Quoting unidentified U.S. officials, the paper said Mr. Major told Mr. Clinton, who made the request in a telephone call Monday, that he would give the matter careful consideration.

While the officials went out of their way to stress that Mr. Major had not turned Mr. Clinton down, one source told

Report: Hundreds of new prisoners in Chinese jails

BEIJING (AFP) — Hundreds of previously unknown prisoners, arrested after the 1989 crackdown on China's pro-democracy movement, are serving lengthy jail terms, a human rights report said Thursday.

The publication of the report by U.S.-based Human Rights Watch Asia, which also provides harrowing accounts of widespread torture in Chinese prisons, comes weeks before Washington must decide whether China has made the necessary progress on human rights to warrant renewal of its preferential trade status.

The 60-page report, entitled The Price Of Obscurity In China, documents almost 500 cases in Beijing alone of previously unrecorded sentences handed down to individuals in the aftermath of the June 4 Tiananmen Square massacre.

More than 200 are still languishing in two correctional facilities run by the Beijing authorities — Beijing No. 2 Prison and Qinghe Farm — performing hard labour and often subject to torture and other abuses.

Almost none of those listed are students or intellectuals and most have received 10 years to life terms, which are far harsher sentences for their involvement in the 1989 protests, the report said.

"We can safely assume that thousands of prisoners whose names we do not know still languish in prison for their role in those protests."

Japan's tottering premier opposes snap elections

TOKYO (R) — Japanese Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata, attempting to prolong the life of his shaky minority government, warned the country Wednesday that an early election would jeopardise hard-won political reforms.

The caution followed a demand Tuesday from the leader of the largest opposition group, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), that Mr. Hata and his three-week-old government quit as soon as the national budget passes parliament.

The LDP, booted out of office last summer after 38 years of unbroken rule, and other opposition parties have pledged to help vote through the long-delayed state budget bill.

Once that becomes law, probably around mid-July, the beleaguered Hata is considered fair game for a no-confidence motion in parliament.

Although elections need not be called before mid-1997, the

Over 100 Burmese troops killed, rebels say

BANGKOK (R) — Guerrillas loyal to opium warlord Khun Sa killed more than 100 Burmese government troops in fierce fighting over the last week, a guerrilla source said Wednesday.

Khun Sa's Mong Tai Army (MTA) overran two government bases, forcing more than 600 Burmese troops to retreat to the north, guerrilla official Keunsa Chaiyen told Reuters in a telephone interview.

Mr. Keunsa said more than 100 Burmese soldiers were killed during the fighting, which died down last Sunday. He said 18 guerrillas were killed.

The government positions overrun were at Mong Kyaw and Hinkong in northeastern Burma's Shan state and government troops were forced to retreat to the town of Mong-ton, he said.

Government forces began an offensive against Khun Sa's stronghold in southern Shan

state late last year and there has been intermittent fighting, at times heavy, since then.

Burma's state-run television, in a broadcast monitored in Bangkok late Tuesday, said government troops and MTA guerrillas clashed in Loi Lan township in southern Shan state last Friday.

The broadcast made no mention of casualties but said government troops seized 3,300 litres (880 gallons) of acetic anhydride acid, a chemical used to refine opium into heroin.

"The chemical was being sent to an opium refining camp of Khun Sa on the Thai-Burma border," the television report said.

"The Tamudaw is crushing the... armed group," the report added, using the official Burmese term for its army.

Mr. Keunsa denied the government report. "They cooked up that story about the chemi-

als to cover their losses," he said.

"The Burmese are lying. That area has been a battlefield for some time and if I were a trader I would never risk building a refinery in a battlefield," he added.

A Thai anti-narcotics officer monitoring developments in Burma also doubted the Burmese government report and said all narcotics-related activity in the area ceased late last year when Burmese government forces began the push against Khun Sa.

Khun Sa, alias Chang Si-Fu, is a 60-year-old half-Chinese, half-Shan commander of more than 10,000 guerrillas.

He says he is fighting the Rangoon junta for the independence of Shan state, but Thai and U.S. anti-narcotics officials accuse him of using his army to protect his heroin business. A U.S. court has indicted him for heroin trafficking.

Charles landed with Diana's 'grooming' bill

LONDON (AFP) — A disgruntled Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, has been landed with a £160,000 (\$240,000) annual bill for his estranged wife Princess Diana's "grooming", the Daily Mail said Wednesday. The £3,000 (\$4,500) a week account is believed to cover some of Princess Diana's clothing, casual wear for her sons, her alternative therapy treatments, make-up, hairdressing and some gifts. Costs of her private holiday travel arrangements are also included. A Kensington Palace source told the Mail: "She has made it pretty clear around here that it will never be allowed to get that high again. Staff have been urged to advise on areas where cuts can be made, and they are already in place."

Deranged man piggybacks parked plane

MANILA (AFP) — A man believed to be mentally deranged passed by tight security at Manila airport before dawn Wednesday and clambered on top of a parked passenger jet. Philippine aviation officials said. Airport police gave chase after they spotted Nestor Escarin, 20, on the ramp area of the domestic airport. The man then ran up the rear stairway of a parked Philippine Airlines Airbus and managed to climb onto the plane, they said. He was finally convinced to climb down after five minutes, and is now under police custody. Airport officials said no flights were disrupted as a result of the stunt.

Nine-year-old organises blackmail of teacher

CHICAGO (AFP) — A nine-year-old girl who did not like her teacher bribed classmates to blackmail him with false accusations of sexual abuse, Chicago police said. The disgruntled schoolgirl paid her classmates a mere dollar to lie about their teacher, 43-year-old Albert Thompson, police said. Mr. Thompson told police that his class at an elementary school in Chicago's rough South Side neighbourhood got unruly on May 9, when he was brought in as a substitute teacher. When he threatened to report the raucous bunch for misbehaviour, the girl offered 10 of her friends a dollar each if they told the school they had been fondled by Mr. Thompson, police said. But police cleared Mr. Thompson when the children gave inconsistent statements and two of them, including the ringleader, admitted they had made the story up. "What's so scary and so sad is that you've got nine-year-old kids sophisticated enough to know they can get a teacher by saying they fondled him," said Jackie Gallagher, the Teachers Union spokeswoman said. The school is now deciding how to best punish the lying youngsters.

First sex-change operations in Belarus

MOSCOW (AFP) — Three people have had sex-change operations in Belarus, the first to be performed in the former Soviet republic, the ITAR-TASS news agency quoted medical officials in Minsk as saying Tuesday. The three, aged 21 and 22, underwent the surgery free of charge, according to the surgeon, Professor Vladimir Podgaiski. Prof. Podgaiski, who received three months of training in Moscow prior to the operations, said the work was no more complicated than reattaching a severed finger.

U.S. weather forecasts may add sunburn warning

WASHINGTON (AFP) — To help Americans combat rising skin cancer rates, the National Weather Service is considering adding a sunburn warning to its temperature and prospective rainfall predictions. Forecasters already give air quality and pollen counts in the summer and wind-chill warnings in the winter. But since sunburn has been linked to skin cancer and, since thin, high clouds can fool people into thinking that it is safe to go outdoors, the National Weather Service is planning a sunburn rating from 1-15 that could go into effect as early as June or July, said the National Weather Service Director. "It's a serious issue, a personal standpoint, from a very concerned about what we can do to help," he said. Skin cancer is the most frequently di-

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NEWS IN BRIEF

NATO to offer Russia special status

BRUSSELS (R) — NATO agreed Wednesday to offer Russia a special partnership following Moscow's refusal to sign the "partnership for peace" scheme and its increasingly anti-Western line, alliance sources said. "Ambassadors from the 16 alliance nations agreed that a special partnership with Russia, which could include extra consultations on European security issues, was needed to take into account its size and weight," said one NATO source. It would be entirely separate from the "partnership for peace" scheme, which is open to all Eastern European states and former Soviet republics. In addition, NATO agreed that other Eastern European states and former Soviet republics would have the right to know the full details of any special arrangement between the alliance and Russia, the sources added. "It will have to be open and transparent," the sources said. The sources said there was no question of giving Russia any veto over NATO decisions.

7 hurt in Hong Kong shootout

HONG KONG (R) — Seven people were injured as police and robbers traded guns in Hong Kong's teeming central business district Wednesday, police said. Police had no information on how serious the injured were. Witnesses saw a policeman, a Western woman and a Chinese man being carried away on stretchers after the gunbattle, which followed a jewellery shop holdup. The Chinese man was covered by a blanket and motionless, with blood pouring from a wound.

Mystery of missing Craxi deepens

ROME (R) — A mystery over the whereabouts of disgraced former Prime Minister Bettino Craxi deepened Wednesday after he sent a sick note telling magistrates he was too ill to hand in his passport, Italian state radio reported. Milan magistrates last week ordered the former Socialist Party leader, who faces some 20 different graft probes, to surrender his passport for fear he might flee the country. But the burly, bald-headed and bespectacled Craxi — prime minister from 1983 to 1987 and one of Italy's best known politicians — has disappeared and is thought to be abroad. He sent the medical certificate and a covering letter by fax to one of his lawyers Tuesday from an undisclosed location. The certificate, signed by a foreign doctor whose nationality has not been released, is reported to refer to diabetes, a condition which the 60-year-old Craxi has suffered from for many years. Italian newspapers commented that this had never prevented Mr. Craxi from carrying out his duties as a high-profile and aggressive prime minister and Socialist leader until he was laid low by the country's huge graft scandal.

Rabin bans food, drink at meetings

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has put a stop to eating and drinking during cabinet meetings in a bid to bring some decorum to the proceedings, a senior official said Wednesday. Mr. Rabin had seen enough of the cabinet table covered in food and drinks plastered across the world's television screens and newspapers and decided to close what had become known as "Yitzhak's cafe." The official, who sits in on the meetings, said ministers were "stunned" Tuesday when they arrived to see the table bare. No more sandwiches, salads, fruit, cakes or hot and cold drinks. In future those feeling the pangs of hunger will have to leave the cabinet room for a small buffet in a nearby corridor. Mr. Rabin has also banned ministers from talking to the press after the meetings. "The rush of ministers to get in front of a microphone or television camera does no good to the image of the government," the official said. However Mr. Rabin, who is also health minister and a chain smoker, has still refused to sign into law a bill passed by parliament banning smoking in all public places.

Iranian police surround Saudi embassy

TEHRAN (AFP) — More than 50 armed riot police were deployed around the Saudi embassy in Tehran Wednesday amid a row between the two countries over a ban on an anti-U.S. rally in Mecca, an AFP correspondent reported. A police officer at the scene told AFP that the move was taken at the request of Saudi authorities to protect the embassy amid mounting tension between the two countries. Iran called off an anti-U.S. and anti-Israel demonstration, planned to be held by Iranian pilgrims in Mecca Tuesday, under the threat of force from the Saudis.

Iran protests against siege in Mecca

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran has strongly protested the siege of its pilgrimage quarter in Mecca by Saudi security forces, saying it had disrupted the pilgrimage procedure, the official Iranian news agency (IRNA) said. The Iranian embassy in Riyadh sent a "strongly worded" letter to the Saudi Foreign Ministry to protest against the siege, it said. "The siege has disrupted the affairs of our people ahead of the pilgrimage period," the embassy said. Special Saudi riot police were stationed around the camp earlier this week after Iran announced it was determined to hold an anti-U.S. and anti-Israel rally in front of the building Tuesday. Iran Tuesday called off the rally.

Ukraine takes tough stance on Crimea

KIEV (R) — Ukraine toughened its stance towards separatist tendencies in the Crimean peninsula Wednesday, pledging to take "all necessary measures" to stop a breakaway by the largely Russian-speaking region. "The... Ukrainian President (Leonid Kravchuk) and parliament will take all necessary measures to stabilise the political situation in Crimea and ensure Ukraine's territorial integrity," said a statement distributed by the Presidential Press Service. The statement did not specify what measures Kiev was ready to take. Russian nationalists have accused Ukraine of preparing to use force to maintain their rule in Crimea, where a pro-Russian president and parliament were elected this year. The semi-autonomous peninsula, with President Yuri Meshkov at the helm, has moved actively to remove itself from Kiev's sphere of influence and forge closer political and economic ties with neighbouring Russia.

China denies prosecuting dissident

BEIJING (R) — China's Foreign Ministry Wednesday denied a "sheer fabrication" a foreign news report that Beijing was preparing to prosecute its most famous dissident, Wei Jingsheng, for high treason. "Our information from the departments concerned shows that this report is a sheer fabrication," a ministry spokesman was quoted as saying by Xinhua News Agency. A foreign news agency Monday reported that Wei, who was detained in April six months after he was paroled following nearly 15 years in prison, would be prosecuted on treason charges. Xinhua said the Foreign Ministry statement was in response to "the report that the Chinese Judicial Department is prosecuting Wei on charges of high treason and he is likely to receive a sentence of 10 to 15 years imprisonment."

U.K., China ends Hong Kong talks

HONG KONG (AFP) — British and Chinese officials Wednesday ended extensive talks on future use of military sites in Hong Kong after 1997 without reaching an accord. Officials on the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group (JLJG) said no agreement had been reached after last week's three days of discussions were extended by four days. Alan Paul, head of the British team, said "we are disappointed, but not despondent" that an agreement was not reached. "We have tried to strike for an agreement," Mr. Paul said, adding "we'll continue our efforts." It was widely reported that the meeting failed because China is now demanding that a bigger naval base than first agreed be built by the British territorial government on Stonecutters Island. It had also changed its position on unused military sites that were to be redeveloped.

Iraqis deplore U.N. decision to maintain sanctions

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraqis were more sad than angry Wednesday after the U.N. Security Council voted to maintain stiff sanctions imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

"Every renewal of sanctions means further deterioration in living standards," said a school teacher on the way to work. "Of course I am sad," a civil servant said. "The price of children's wear is about 1,000 dinars, three times my salary."

News that the Security Council voted Tuesday to maintain the stiff sanctions which bar Iraq's exports of oil and have thereby devastated its economy cast a deep pall over Baghdad.

The Iraqi dinar this week hit a record low of 400 to the dollar.

The Security Council, meeting in New York, voted not to consider easing sanctions until Iraq meets all requirements to scrap its weapons of mass destruction, perhaps later this year.

But it was split on interpretation of the 1991 Gulf War ceasefire resolution, with the U.S. at odds with some other members in its demands that Iraq comply with a host of other conditions, including ending persecution of Kurds and Shiites.

The U.N. decision could not have come at a worse time for Iraqis planning to celebrate the Muslim feast of Eid Al Adha Saturday.

"What Eid?" one woman said, her shopping basket containing only a few onions.

"The council will not lift the sanctions. America will never let us live like before."

Iraqis, used to a comparatively luxurious way of life before sanctions, now find it impossible to buy even a chocolate bar for their children.

"You can look but not buy," a man whispered in a supermarket. "When the embargo will go, I do not know."

"Fear God," retorted an old man with an optician's prescription when told the cheapest glasses in the city now cost 1,000 dinars. The man's monthly pension is 200 dinars.

Signs of the usually festive Eid Al Adha celebrations are noticeably absent from Baghdad. In the past, residents followed closely the haj (pilgrimage) festivities in Mecca and many people bought new clothes and slaughtered a sheep in observance in the Muslim holy city.

This year, only 600 Iraqis could afford to make the haj out of a quota of 19,000 permitted to travel to Mecca by the Saudi religious authorities.

"We are being strangled. Medicine is rare, food scarce. Something has to be done. It is no use waiting for the Security Council anymore," a shopkeeper said.

"It is time we stopped cooperation with the United Nations unless we get a pledge to have the sanctions eased or lifted," a resident said. "We have given the U.N. everything and have gotten nothing in return."

IAEA team starts work at N. Korea atomic complex

VIENNA (R) — United Nations nuclear inspectors arrived at North Korea's atomic complex at Yongbyon Wednesday and have started work, the U.N.'s nuclear safeguards agency said.

A spokesman at the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said he was unable to confirm whether the three-man team had visited a five-megawatt nuclear reactor at the complex, which some reports have said Pyongyang has begun refuelling in defiance of the IAEA.

There is some confusion whether North Korea has just shut down the controversial reactor to allow its core to cool before refuelling, or whether it has removed its uranium fuel rods.

The IAEA insists it must carry out tests on the rods to

find out if Pyongyang has diverted radioactive material for a suspected nuclear arms programme. Some Western governments believe North Korea already possesses a crude nuclear device but Pyongyang has rigorously denied this.

The IAEA experts left for North Korea at the weekend to take up an offer by the Communist government allowing the agency to complete tests at a nuclear reprocessing plant at Yongbyon that it blocked in March. Additionally, Pyongyang said the team could check seals and cameras at the reactor, but that was all.

The IAEA spokesman said he had no further details of the work carried out Wednesday but the inspectors would contact agency headquarters every day during their stay in North Korea.

Balaguer holds on to lead in Dominican elections

SANTO DOMINGO (AFP) — President Joaquin Balaguer seems closer to being reelected for a seventh term, as partial results from Monday's general elections put him ahead of his nearest rival by a 44-40 per cent margin.

Trailing behind 87-year-old Balaguer and opposition candidate Jose Francisco Pena Gomez, 57, was former president Juan Bosch, 81, with 13 per cent of the vote, the Central Election Board said with

62 per cent of the vote count in.

Pena Gomez, of the Dominican Revolutionary Party, and other opposition leaders have publicly charged the board with election fraud, prompting the police to take positions Tuesday around the capital to deter unrest.

The charges were potentially explosive. Though the voting went without incident, 30 people were killed in election-related violence during the campaign.

Malawians vote on regional lines in watershed poll

BLANTYRE, Malawi (R) — A fierce three-party battle in Malawi's watershed elections emerged as results were announced Wednesday, with voters overwhelmingly backing candidates from their tribal regions.

As counting of ballots of Tuesday's polls moved at a snail's pace, provisional results showed a tough fight between veteran President Kamuzu Banda, his arch rival Bakili Muluzi and another opposition leader Chakufwa Chihana.

Mr. Banda, Malawi's sole leader since independence from Britain in 1964, swept the board in some districts in his stronghold and home area in central Malawi.

Mr. Muluzi, a 51-year-old former political pupil of Banda, took a massive lead in the south, his powerbase, and threatened to snatch some seats close to the midlands.

The elections, forced on autocratic Banda by mounting internal agitation for democracy and a 1992 cut-off of vital aid by the West to press for

political reforms, were Malawi's first in 30 years of Banda's one-man rule.

The results being announced by state radio showed Mr. Chihana, leader of the opposition Alliance for Democracy (Aforid) and former trade unionist, clearing the decks in the north, his home area.

"It looks like a tribal vote," an African diplomat told Reuters. "Of course it is too early to make out a definitive trend, but the partial results point to this."

Most of Malawi's 9.7 million people, almost four million of whom registered to vote in Tuesday's elections, are illiterate and live in rural areas.

The radio, allowed for the first time to stay open for 24 hours to broadcast the results, stressed it did not yet have a full ballot tally from most constituencies.

Election officials said there had been delays in the vote count caused by lack of transport in move ballots from polling in counting stations.



GAZA FREED: Palestinian policemen are carried on shoulders by the crowd at the command headquarters in Gaza City. The Israeli army pulled out of its last positions in

Gaza City completing its withdrawal from newly-autonomous Palestinian territories of the Gaza Strip and Jericho (AFP photo)

U.N. force in Rwanda warns reinforcement delays will cost lives

KIGALI (R) — The beleaguered U.N. force in Rwanda warned Wednesday that more civilians were bound to perish because of delays in sending reinforcements to end six weeks of carnage.

The U.N. Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) appealed for urgent help from the international community as it revised how long it would take to bolster its peacekeeping force from 470 to 5,500, strong as approved by the U.N. Security Council Tuesday.

"We want to emphasise that it is fine for the world to be appalled at the carnage and condemn it but it is time to do something," UNAMIR Executive Director Abdul Kabia told Reuters.

"We need logistical support, armoured personnel carriers (APCs), and troops to stop the carnage. Everyone is appalled by the killing but the world must back up this kind of concern and act now."

"We feel that the longer the delay the more people will die either from starvation or a lack of medical facilities and the more we will be unable to give protection to people," he added.

"We also suspect that more people will be killed as we will not have access to areas where U.N. protection is required."

The main purpose of the all-African U.N. force is to protect civilians and aid workers by establishing "secure humanitarian areas" amid the killing fields of the central African country.

Aid officials estimate more than 500,000 people, most from the minority Tutsi tribe, have been slaughtered since Hutu President Juvénal Habyarimana was killed on April 6 in a rocket attack on his plane.

UNAMIR force Commander General Romeo Dallaire says it may take as long as a

month or two before the new force is in place.

Mr. Kabia said UNAMIR had received no word from New York on when the first 50 military observers would arrive and it looked as if it would take much longer than a week for the first 500 Ghanaian reinforcements to reach Kigali.

Several African countries, including neighbouring Tanzania, have tentatively offered to send contingents, but even Ghana said it is studying the Security Council resolution in detail.

The United States had offered to transport the troops to Rwanda and provide some equipment but wanted the reinforcements in safe areas near the borders instead of in the capital Kigali.

"We have still not received any written assurances on who will provide the logistical support in the form of an airlift to get the troops in or who will provide APCs which are crucial," Mr. Kabia said.

"It is pointless to put men on the ground without equipment."

Asked about Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans' comments that the mandate for the U.N. force was unworkable, Mr. Kabia said he believed it was enough for "a robust peacekeeping operation."

"Under it we can now defend ourselves if we feel that people we are protecting or convoys we are escorting are threatened. We don't have to wait for them to be shot at before we respond."

Meanwhile, Rwandan rebels condemned Wednesday delays in bolstering the U.N. force in Rwanda and vowed to end massacres by seizing the whole bloodsoaked country.

Denis Polisi, deputy vice-chairman of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), said it appeared the U.N. humanitarian operation ordered Tues-

day appeared to be taking too long to get off the ground.

"If they are thinking of a month, or two before all their forces reach Rwanda then we think that is too long to be useful."

"We would rather say they gave up their mission. People are still suffering every day. People are still dying and we think a month or two is too long to be of any meaningful purpose," he told Reuters.

"This delay is proof again of the U.N.'s unending bureaucracy. First they took too long to react and even when they finally did they can't get themselves together," he added.

He welcomed the U.N. saying its reinforcements were being sent in purely for humanitarian purposes but warned that if they did anything else then they would be considered an enemy force.

The RPF says it has passed conditions to the U.N. in New York — without a response — on the terms of the U.N. mission.

U.N. officers said Wednesday more than a month of talks on arranging a ceasefire between government forces and the rebels were making some progress but declined to give details.

Mr. Polisi said the RPF would never hold face-to-face talks with the rump Rwandan government, which it accuses of being the "clique of killers" behind the massacres of members of the Tutsi minority.

But he said the RPF, which is dominated by Tutsis, was ready to arrange a conditional ceasefire with government forces.

"The ceasefire with the army can only be arranged when the massacres stopped," he said. "But our goal remains to stop the killings and we can only do so by liberating the whole country."

Turkish troops kill 47 Kurds in clashes

ANKARA (R) — Turkish troops, stepping up their campaign against Kurdish guerrillas, killed 47 rebels in clashes in southeastern Turkey, Anatolian News Agency said Wednesday.

The agency said 28 members of the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) were killed Tuesday in Adiyaman province. Troops killed 17 PKK guerrillas in another gunbattle in Hakkari province on the same day.

Two rebels died in clashes in Bingol and Siirt provinces. More than 11,650 people have been killed in Turkey since 1984 when the PKK began its campaign for an independent state in the southeast.

Turkish military aircraft struck a major PKK camp at Zaleh inside northern Iraq Wednesday, the Anatolian News Agency said.

Turkey hit the same camp once before on Jan. 28. Kurdish militants threatened Wednesday to intensify attacks

on tourist sites frequented by Westerners in Turkey in an escalation of the bloody 10-year war.

The Europe representative of the National Liberation Front of Kurdistan (ERNK), the political wing of the PKK, said rebels would maintain pressure on popular Turkish tourist areas.

"We do not want Westerners to go to Turkey. Tourism is a pleasure and Europeans must abandon this idea of pleasure," Kani Yilmaz told a news conference in Brussels.

"Tourists do not go to Bosnia and our war is a much more serious one than that in Bosnia," Mr. Yilmaz added.

He said the PKK planned to attack all economic targets, including tourism, in Turkey.

"We want to hit all targets which affect Turkey's economy," he said, without giving further details.

There have been several PKK bombings in Istanbul and

other coastal resorts in Turkey in the past 10 months. In an attack last month, two tourists were killed and at least 15 injured in a bomb explosion in Istanbul's Covered Bazaar.

Turkish troops have stepped up their campaign against Turkish guerrillas in recent days.

Mr. Yilmaz said the intensity of attacks in Kurdistan demanded international attention.

He accused Germany of playing a direct role in the Kurdish conflict and of providing arms to Turkish forces.

"The fact that a country such as Germany helps Turkey with arms and has become directly involved in the war encourages the Turkish state to spill more blood," Mr. Yilmaz said.

He said 30,000 Kurds had fled into northern Iraq following recent attacks by Turkish forces.

Turkey said last week that the outlawed PKK had orchestrated the exodus as a publicity ploy.

Sudan peace talks again delayed

NAIROBI (AFP) — Southern rebels again failed to turn up for talks with Sudan's fundamentalist Islamic government Wednesday, delaying the East-African country's slow and painful peace process.

Government negotiators and delegates from one of the two rival factions of the mainly Christian Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) have been waiting in Nairobi since Monday for the Kenyan-chaired meeting to open.

But representatives of the mainstream SPLA faction led by John Garang have not showed up.

A spokesman said they were "bogged down" wading through swampy swamps in southern Sudan on their way to Kenya by foot.

The rebel officials were forced to walk in heavy rain that made roads impassable to vehicles because government warplanes had bombed Chukudum airstrip in southeastern

Sudan, from where they had planned to fly to the Nairobi talks, spokesman Stephen Wondu said.

"We would like to assure the international community that we are making efforts to come," Mr. Wondu told AFP Wednesday.

The planned talks would be the latest in a series of so far fruitless efforts by a six-member regional group to broker a peaceful settlement to the decades-old conflict.

COLUMN

Charles mounts 'save St Petersburg' crusade

ST PETERSBURG (R) — Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, has called for an international effort to save historic St Petersburg from economic misery and physical decay. On the second day of a ground-breaking four-day trip to Russia's northwestern "city of the tsars", the 45-year-old prince saw for himself the privations of post-Soviet life, and appealed to the West to help. The prince, the first top-ranking British royal to visit Russia since the 1917 revolution, was invited to St Petersburg by Mayor Anatoly Sobchak to publicise the plight of a city struggling to cope with economic dislocation and soaring crime. In the main engagement of Tuesday's programme, the royal guest toured the city's biggest casualty hospital and learned the chronic state of a Russian healthcare system starved of cash and lacking the most basic modern equipment. In the twilight zone of Russian economics, taxi drivers and prostitutes demanding hard currency payment earn more than surgeons, whose average monthly wage is the equivalent of \$60. Prince Charles urged European and U.S. hospitals to explore ways of donating old but still useable equipment to Russian medical centres after seeing the rusty scalpels and other antiquated items currently used in operations here. "Seeing is believing," he said as he toured St Petersburg's Marinskaya Casualty Hospital. To Western eyes, the operating theatres seem to be sets from a period movie or a display from medical museum. "Until you come here it is difficult to tell what the particular problems are," he said.

Russian buys Stalin victim's Faberge egg

GENEVA (R) — A Russian art collector paid just over 1.2 million Swiss francs (\$850,000) for an enamelled Easter egg made by royal jeweller Karl Fabergé for a riches-to-rags industrialist who died in a Stalinist camp. At an auction by Christie's of pre-revolutionary antiques, another Russian bought a second Fabergé egg, made for an oil magnate who fled the country after the 1917 Bolshevik takeover, for 311,500 Swiss francs (\$219,000). Both buyers were unidentified, but were understood to be former citizens of the old Soviet Union now living in Western Europe. The first egg — the Green nephrite Apple Blossom — was one of several created by Fabergé in 1901 for the Russian mining and shipping entrepreneur Alexander Kelch as a present for his wife Barbara. The short, dark-haired buyer at Tuesday's auction, clearly known to many other Russian-speaking antique dealers present, said it was for his private collection. "I no longer live in Russia," he said when asked if he was taking it back there. He declined to comment further. In a fast-paced auction at Geneva's Hotel Richemond, he outbid at least two other Russians to win the egg for 1.1 million Swiss francs (\$774,465) before commission. People in the hall, including rival bidders, burst into applause when the auctioneer's hammer came down. The price was among the highest ever paid for a Fabergé egg produced for a client outside the Russian royal family, for whom the famous jeweller made at least 57 Easter eggs between 1885 and 1916.

White House releases Clinton's income

WASHINGTON (AFP) — In keeping with President Bill Clinton's pledge to be open and avoid any appearance of conflict of interest, the White House published the first family's net worth for 1993. But the financial disclosure — which also included first daughter Chelsea's assets — only gave a ballpark figure of between \$633,000 and \$1.6 million as it was calculated on a margin, rather than exact worth. Last July, Mr. Clinton voluntarily put most of his assets in a "blind trust," an independently managed account that presidents traditionally use in order to avoid any suspicion of using their office for personal enrichment. Aside from the assets in that account, the Clintons earned \$293,000 in 1993 income, \$189,000 from the president's salary.